

January 9, 2006

Honorable Dave Heineman, Governor  
State Capitol Building  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Governor Heineman:

We the undersigned NRD Board Chairmen want to thank you for your support of water management activities in the Republican River Basin. In particular, we are encouraged by your support for incentive programs and management activities that will help the State of Nebraska stay in compliance with the terms of the Republican River Compact and the *Kansas v. Nebraska* settlement agreement.

Republican Basin NRDs are committed to do our part to help the State of Nebraska maintain compliance with the Compact as adopted in 1943 and as implemented in accordance with the 2003 Settlement Agreement approved by the United States Supreme Court. In addition, we want to ensure that Republican Basin ground water and surface water resources are protected and preserved for the benefit of future generations.

We are encouraged by water use reports for this year from across the basin. Groundwater users pumped 15-30 percent less water in 2005 than they were allocated. We are proud of our farmers' good stewardship of our groundwater resources. We continually encourage farmers to avoid additional mandatory reductions in water use by maintaining these high levels of water use efficiency.

The integrated management plan objectives for Republican Basin NRDs call for compact compliance to be achieved through a combination of regulatory and incentive programs designed to limit, and if necessary reduce beneficial consumptive use of basin water supplies. All districts have adopted regulatory programs that are deemed sufficient by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources to maintain compact compliance under average climatic conditions. We realize that basin integrated management plans may need to be revised in the near future, depending on hydrologic conditions in 2008 – 2010, to limit water use during periods of extreme drought.

Basin-wide incentive programs, particularly those aimed at reducing surface water consumption, will be an effective tool to help Nebraska stay in compliance with the compact during water short years. In the longer term other activities, such as riparian vegetation management and maximizing Nebraska's imported water supply credit, will also help insure compact compliance.

If incentive programs and other actions prove inadequate to insure compact compliance, Republican Basin NRDs will work with the State of Nebraska to develop rules and regulations that equitably and effectively reduce water consumption by all water users. In conclusion, we look forward to continuing to work with you and other state officials to honor Nebraska's commitment to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact and the *Kansas v. Nebraska* lawsuit settlement.

Respectfully,

Greg Pelster, Chairman, Upper Republican NRD

Gayle Haag, Chairman, Middle Republican NRD

Nelson Trambly, Chairman, Lower Republican NRD

Bradley Lundeen, Chairman, Tri-Basin NRD

David Nelson, President, NARD