Water Funding and Planning

<u>Funding Source-</u> dedicated source determined by Legislature (need to identify alternatives for Legislature to consider?)

<u>Oversight-</u> 10-15 member Oversight Committee established consisting of chairs of Legislature's Natural Resources and Appropriations committees; irrigators (3-one each from congressional districts; or reps from different basins); Natural Resources Commission chair; reps from munis, environmental, conservation groups; at-large members. Those members not designated in law appointed by Governor.

- Develop long-range plan for funding needs related to water management and research. The long-range plan will guide distribution of dollars.
- Develop guidelines/rules on distribution of dollars based on long-range plan.
- Long-range plan submitted to Governor and Legislature. Annual report to Governor/Legislature/public on dollars spent; benefits; needs and progress on long-range plan
- Responsible for accountability and management of dedicated funds
- Permanent staffing through DNR? Other?

<u>Distribution-</u>Funds distributed to three broad areas: (1) research, modeling, data gathering; (2) efforts/actions/programs to achieve sustainability and reduce consumptive use (3) grants to for interrelated management and/or other water management costs. Percentage of dollars that go to each area could be determined in law or set by the Oversight Committee

(1) Research, modeling, data
- Seek input of stakeholders in basins on the technical information needed for better understanding of ground and surface water resources in order to develop sound management programs. Also identify related topics that impact water budget in basins.
- DNR, NRDs, university, irrigation districts, consultants, etc. would provide input into research needs
- State technical committee consisting of technical experts, policy makers, and others identify long-term research needs, develop plan, prioritize research and outline appropriate entities to research. Plan approved by Oversight Committee.
- Technical Committee (with Oversight Committee approval?) would provide grants or enter into contracts with DNR, NRDs, university, private entities and others for research and data activities based on long-term plan.
- Technical committee accountable for research and provide oversight to insure research is completed. Provide annual report to Oversight Committee on research activities.

- Funds compounded with federal, NRD or other local funds to extent possible

(2) Efforts/programs/management activities to achieve sustainability and reduce consumptive use
- Areas of need include Republican, Platte, Pumpkin Creek. Other basins?
- Subcommittees in basins would construct an inventory of efforts/programs/management activities to achieve basin goals, their costs, expected potential benefits, and the nature of the potential benefits. From the inventory seek to develop long-term plan to achieve goals in the most cost-effective manner while minimizing economic impacts.
- Subcommittees provide inventory and make recommendations to Oversight Committee
- Oversight Committee distributes funds to DNR, NRDs, irrigation districts, and other groups within basins for efforts/programs/management activities upon recommendation of subcommittees based on statewide priorities.
- Project sponsor must provide 20% match?
- Could be leveraged with federal dollars

(3) Grants for interrelated management and other water management activities
- Dollars distributed to NRD, irrigation districts, munis and others to offset costs incurred due to interrelated management activities, regulations and controls
- Provide grants for cost-share programs
- Must provide 20% match

Other Issues (?):
- DNR would continue to receive funding for LB 962 activities through state general fund for staffing and administrative costs. Technical studies needed by DNR could be funded through research dollars administered above.
- Natural resources development fund would continue to receive general fund dollars and not be part of the above process