

**TESTIMONY TO BE PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF THE  
IRRIGATION PROJECTS REAUTHORIZATION COUNCIL  
REGARDING WATER SUPPLY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS  
IN THE REPUBLICAN RIVER BASIN**

Time was when one person's actions had little noticeable impact on another—water users in Nebraska and in the Republican River basin were generally dependant directly on the flow in the river during high demand summer days—ground water use was limited to small domestic demands and where unavailable land development was restricted by the lack of available water.

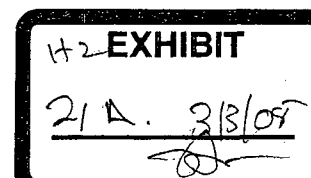
Those times are gone...water developments now include the development and use of water from the rivers and streams and the reservoirs built to store surface water for use when demand was greatest...and the development of much of the available ground water, both in the river alluvium and in the uplands of the entire Republican River basin.

Over the years [more than 100 years] detailed laws have developed to regulate and limit the uses of surface waters in the State and that along with natural limitations have restricted the uses of those supplies.

For the most part similar restrictions on the use of ground water resources have been the result of actual availability. Limited regulation of the use of the ground water supplies has been prevalent only in [the Upper Republican NRD] this natural resources district in the Republican Basin and those controls appear to some experts to have been inadequate by today's water supply obligations to the entire river basin.

There are several factors which should be remembered whenever discussion occurs regarding the needs to manage the basin water supply:

1. Surface water irrigation from both natural flow and storage water use is the original and oldest of the water use commitments and is the backbone of irrigation development in the basin.
2. Surface water irrigation in most areas has resulted in economic access to ground water in the alluvial valleys, much of which was not generally available before surface project deliveries and the related ground water recharge.
3. Surface water irrigation distribution and deliveries have stabilized and enhanced tributary stream flows in the basin, both in the alluvial valleys and the uplands.



4. Ground water developments have generally occurred chronologically later than the surface water irrigation developments throughout the basin.
5. There is a growing recognition that irrigation water supplies from any source should be acknowledged as a "supplemental supply" and not a primary source of water for the growing of crops in a semi arid climate, such as may be found in the Republican River basin in most years.
6. There is an economic and a political rationale for managing the use of all available irrigation water supplies at total levels similar to each other; and that such commitments can and should be administered by using either surface water, ground water or combinations thereof to achieve that equitable division.
7. Continued unregulated or underregulated use of available ground water resources at levels which exceed the estimated sustained yield of the system and which thereby encroach upon the available surface water supplies as well will in the long term adversely impact the viability of the water supply system and will also induce political and economic conflicts between those irrigation water users to the detriment of all.

The Irrigation Projects Reauthorization Council, which represents most of the surface irrigation project sponsors in the Republican River Basin, worked diligently throughout its efforts to renew water service commitments from the surface water storage and storage use capabilities of the United States government in the Republican basin with the idea in mind that the continued availability of those critical water supplies were central to a successful water use policy in the basin.

The Council now also believes that sound management of the ground water available to the basin should likewise be protected and managed in a way which will best allow that portion of the available resource to be a continuing part of the entire water resources supply system for the basin.

The Council has consistently encouraged the State of Nebraska and the natural resources districts responsible for managing of the several sources of water supply in the Republican River to each do their part in a responsible water supply management program for the future of all water use interests. Member irrigation districts to the IPRC

will also continue to do their part to assist their constituents to be a responsible part of a total water use management system for the future.

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**KANSAS BOSTWICK IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

**NEBRASKA BOSTWICK IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

**FRENCHMAN-VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

**FRENCHMAN-CAMBRIDGE IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

**ALMENA IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

