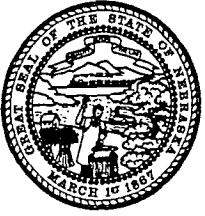


STATE OF NEBRASKA



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Roger K. Patterson
Director

July 21, 2003

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Mike Johanns
Governor

Gayle Haag, Chairperson
Middle Republican NRD
HC #66, Box #25A
Bartley, NE 69020

Dear Mr. Haag:

As you know, the Department recently issued a report entitled "Republican River Basin – Report of Preliminary Findings." In that May 20, 2003 report I reached the preliminary conclusion that use of hydrologically connected groundwater and surface water is contributing to disputes over the Republican River Compact and will contribute to future disputes over that compact. A hearing to consider that report was held in your natural resources district in McCook on June 24, 2003.

I have considered all the testimony and other evidence presented at that hearing and the hearings in the other three NRDs involved and have concluded that no further studies or investigations need to be conducted by me or on my behalf at this time. No changes have been made in the May 20, 2003 report and the preliminary findings and conclusions in that report are now considered final. In my opinion, it is therefore appropriate for our department and your district to proceed with the joint planning process authorized by Section 46-656.28.

Subsection (4) of Section 46-656.28 requires that your district determine by order whether to proceed with developing a joint action plan for integrated management. That determination is to be made within 90 days after the June 24 hearing unless further studies or investigations are conducted by me or on my behalf. Since I have determined that no such further studies or investigations are to be conducted, the decision required of your district is to be made on or before September 22, 2003.

On the assumption that your board will agree that a joint action plan should be prepared, I look forward to working with your board and staff and those of the other Republican Basin natural resources districts as we proceed.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Roger K. Patterson in cursive.

Roger K. Patterson
Director

lg
cc: David Cookson
Dan Smith, Manager

clrshare/patterson