

1 ORAL STATEMENT OF DARREL NIMMO

2 THE WITNESS: I am president of the
3 North La Junta Conservative District. My
4 district is from the headgates of Fort Lyon to
5 Vine Street, basically through La Junta on the
6 north side of the river.

7 And the river is in a terrible shape at
8 this time, because we are in the middle of a
9 seven-year drought. And there is not much water
10 going down the river, and it's caused a terrible
11 undergrowth, or overgrowth, whatever you want to
12 call it, because the absence of the water, it
13 grows faster than with the water there.

14 And possibly in '99 we were, from
15 Bureau of Reclamation records, we had nine
16 thousand cubic feet per second of water go
17 through La Junta before the banks breached. But
18 now in 2008 the undergrowth has just took the
19 river channel over, because the Fort Lyon canal
20 is diverting all the water to the canal, which
21 is north of the Arkansas River. And it's caused
22 this rapid growth of Tamarac and everything
23 else.

24 So I've kept real close track. I have
25 a program on my computer that I can pull up any

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1 satellite water gauge. And if you are familiar
2 with the flood that happened last fall in

3 Avondale, that was about 8,000 feet. And we
4 were able to divert some of this after it got by
5 Avondale to these district companies here.
6 Holbrook Lake we diverted water to it. And,
7 luckily, we didn't have a flood then. We would
8 have.

9 Then you remember we had a little
10 session here last fall, too. And I paid special
11 attention to the amount the water would hold
12 without danger to property or lives. And it
13 was -- it started to breach at 6,000 feet. And
14 that was last year.

15 So I'm assuming probably to pasture
16 that river is like 5,500 feet. It would
17 probably breach, but we wouldn't be devastated.
18 So anything over that, and from past performance
19 of our northern neighbors, Colorado Springs,
20 they are not too careful with how they turn
21 water down to Fountain, or what's in it. I
22 farm, and there's a lot of raw sewage gets down
23 that far, believe it or not.

24 And I know that things happen. But,
25 you know, it's happened repeatedly. And I know

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1 they are trying to do something about it, but
2 trying ain't good enough, you know.

3 Between the Fountain, St. Charles and
4 the Arkansas, we are at the mercy of the river.
5 That's it, because we got three entities there

6 that control how much goes down it.

7 And if the payback water has to come
8 down the Fountain, then it's a absolute
9 necessity that we have some sort of flood
10 control.

11 And you know, old Senator Ken Salazar,
12 he's been doing a study. Probably the apple is
13 ripe for all of us to get united and get some
14 flood control on the Fountain. And then we can
15 have some good. If we had several reservoirs
16 and flood control on that Fountain, you could
17 expand the water usage. When flood water goes,
18 nobody gets any good out of it. But if you can
19 control the flow, probably Colorado Springs
20 could cut the amount of pumping, they could
21 recycle the water, there's recreation,
22 there's -- man, that's all kind of
23 possibilities.

24 Before we get that water up there, and
25 a lot of folks are fussing about which side of

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1 the dam they take it out of, I don't think
2 that's a real issue in the math. The issue is,
3 have someplace to put your payback water before
4 you get the water. And I think we ought to
5 unite to figure out something that we all can
6 live with, because if you are going to put more
7 water in an already too full Fountain Creek, you
8 remember what happened there last fall in
9 Pueblo. That wasn't even a flood event. You

10 see, the Corps of Engineers did a study on the
11 Fountain Creek. And they seen it was cost
12 prohibitive to put flood control. So they come
13 down to the east end of Pueblo and put some
14 little old Mickey Mouse sand dikes. And you
15 know what happened right there below Wal-Mart?
16 It flooded, big time. And that wasn't even a
17 flood event, that was just a little rain.

18 So imagine if we -- you see, the
19 problem is with Colorado Springs, used to, the
20 water would dissipate in the ground. But now
21 you've covered them with shopping malls and
22 houses. And water gets stronger. When more
23 water collects together, it's kind of like a
24 band of Indians, they get stronger and that's
25 what happens.

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1 Before, we could get rid of some of
2 this wastewater before it got here. But now
3 you're shooting it right square onto us, and
4 there is no chance to --

5 I think the only situation is, some way
6 that we can live together and figure out a way
7 to control the flood and all be benefited.

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