

The Potential Cost of Nutrients Regulation

Our District is a member of the Lower Fountain Metropolitan Sewage Disposal District (Lower Fountain). Since May 2010 the Lower Fountain has been constructing a new regional water reclamation facility to handle the District's wastewater needs. During this same period, the Colorado Water Quality Control Division proposed new, stricter standards for allowable nutrients levels within the state's lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams. As proposed, the new standards would set limits that are about ten (10) times lower than current nutrient limits. This in turn would increase the cost of constructing the Lower Fountain facility by more than double to pay for the technology needed to treat the wastewater to the proposed limits. This could require the District to increase wastewater rates by up to 100% of current rates to pay for its share in the Lower Fountain facility.

The District Board recognizes the potential adverse health and environmental effects that excessive nutrients in our state waters cause, and to that extent the Board supports reasonable and cost-effective nutrients regulation. However, the Board believes the current proposal is neither reasonable nor cost-effective, as it also fails to address other significant contributors of nutrients found in our state's waters. In the District's perspective, even if nutrients in water from wastewater treatment plants are controlled, it would not solve the nutrients issue on the larger scale. The current lack of water quality data on nutrients across the state and the range of potential nutrient sources make this a complex and difficult issue to address. As a Lower Fountain member, the District tracks this issue through the Colorado Nutrients Coalition.

Because of the potentially extreme economic consequences the proposed regulation could have on this community, the District Board encourages you to take an active interest in supporting reasonable nutrient standards and become better informed on this important issue. The Board also encourages its residents to come to the Board meetings with any questions and the Board will do its best to answer them.

The following web links provide an overview of the nutrients issue:

<http://www.nfrwqpa.org/pdf/Agendas/Colorado%20Water%20Congress%20Nutrient%20Coalition%20Comments%20to%20WQCD%20on%20Nutrient%20Concept%20Paper.pdf>

http://projects.ch2m.com/cwqf/Workgroups/nutrient.asp?StartFolder=./Content/nutrient_criteria/Meetings

<http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/standards/criteria/nutrients/index.cfm>