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**New Water Efficiency Plan Program and Colorado House Bill - 1051**

### NEW WATER EFFICIENCY PLAN PROGRAM AND COLORADO HOUSE BILL-1051

Kevin Reidy, the State Water Conservation Specialist for the Colorado Water Conservation Board, spoke second. Reidy presented on the current state of Colorado's water conservation policy and legislation, focusing specifically on Colorado House Bill-1051 ("Bill-1051"). State Senator Bruce Whitehead and State Representative Jack Pommer sponsored the bill, and the Colorado legislature adopted it on February 1, 2012. Bill-1051 builds on existing water efficiency and conservation programs and provides water planners with a more accurate picture of current conservation efforts.

Reidy emphasized data collection as a necessary tool that allows the water community to work through uncertainties in Colorado's future supply and demand. He explained that Bill-1051 provides the means for this necessary data collection so water planners will have a more accurate picture of water efficiency efforts and access to centralized data of water efficiency plans throughout the state. Ultimately, Reidy explained, the legislature will funnel the data gathered from Bill-1051 to the Colorado Water Conservation Board ("CWCB"), which will then provide the public with an access point for the data. Reidy noted that this will allow water planners to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the gap between water supply and demand and an overall picture of efficiency efforts statewide.

The water community has received Bill-1051 relatively well. The CWCB is currently creating the online database reporting tool to allow public access to the information. Skeptics are uncertain as to whether the online database will be an effective means of relaying information to the water community. Reidy, however, noted that only time will tell whether Bill-1051 will accomplish all that it set out to do.

*Christine Romo*

### DROUGHT PARALLELS AND LESSONS LEARNED: 2002 TO 2012

In the afternoon, the speakers began to focus on the impacts of drought on Colorado. Nolan Doesken, climatologist for the Colorado Climate Center ("CCC"), presented on the topic of progress and challenges in Colorado's climate variability. He focused on the parallels to and lessons learned from the droughts of 2002 and 2012. Both years experienced annual precipitation well below the seventeen-inch state average, yet Doesken stressed how Colorado is currently more prepared than in 2002 because of lessons it learned from that drought.

In contrast, the last major drought before 2002 occurred over two decades before that, in 1980. Doesken explained that the wet 1990s gave the state a false sense of security and the 2002 drought forced municipalities to reevaluate their water use demands. Even given the higher level of preparedness today, Doesken cautioned that utilities in 2002 could meet the increased demand because state reservoir levels were stable. The less extreme temperatures and lower evapotranspiration rates allowed reservoir levels to maintain stability in 2002, whereas today, reservoir levels are much more variable.