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## Hot Topic: International Water Law

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## Hot Topic: International Water Law

### HOT TOPIC: INTERNATIONAL WATER LAW

Professor Stephen McCaffrey of the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, California, hosted the final presentation of the conference, titled "International Water Law & Management in the 21st Century." Professor McCaffrey has extensive experience in this area, and his stories from across the world left some in the audience with the sense that he could have hosted his own conference on the topic. A statistical snapshot: there are 264 international drainage basins in the world; they cover forty-five percent of the world's land surface and sixty percent of the surface of Africa. Professor McCaffrey boiled his presentations down to a few truths - that most of the world's freshwater is shared between countries, population is increasing, development of water is increasing, water is a finite resource, and with climate change comes changes in water resources as well. Add these truths up, and the world is presented with either a great possibility for conflict or for cooperation.

In order to guide the countries that share water resources towards cooperation, Professor McCaffrey told the audience that "we have seen the future, and it is the Colorado River." Essentially, the well-known and well-negotiated history of the Colorado River (as well as the Nile River, which he also discussed) epitomizes many of the classic characteristics of other large international river systems. Most of the water comes from the Upper basin, and mostly used in the lower basin; power politics shift over the life of the river and what starts as a conflict has great potential to move to cooperation. To this end, Professor McCaffrey outlined some of the key aspects of the United Nations Convention on Non-Navigable Uses of International Watercourses and to what end they could play in encouraging cooperation instead of conflict.

*Paul Tigan*

### COLORADO WATER BAR

#### **SUMMARY AND STATUS OF WATER BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE 2008 GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Denver, Colorado**

**February 26, 2008**

Bret A. Fox and Steven O. Sims of Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber and Schreck gave a lunchtime presentation on the water bills introduced in the Colorado General Assembly's 2008 spring session. Mr. Sims began by giving a brief introduction of the Colorado Water Congress, an organization that monitors and sometimes gives public support or opposition to water bills in the assembly. During the meeting, Mr. Sims and Mr. Fox discussed eight of the bills in the General Assembly.