

To: Interested Parties

From: Chris Keating, Keating Research and Lori Weigel, Public Opinion Strategies

Date: March 3, 2015

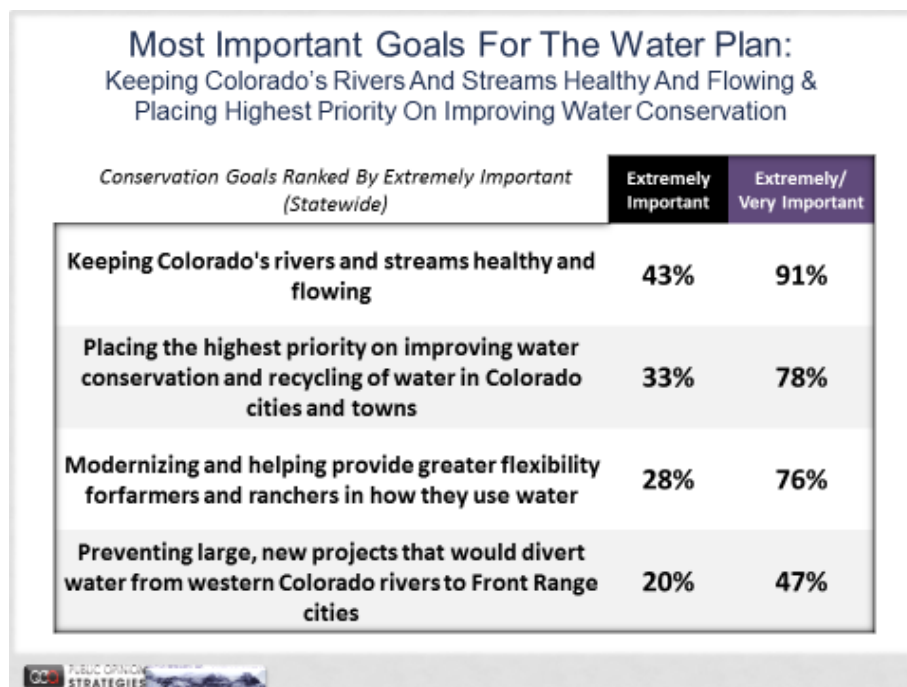
Re: Colorado Statewide Water Poll Key Findings

These results are based on a live telephone poll, including traditional land lines and cell-phones, conducted September 5-8, 2014 among a representative sample of 500 voters statewide in Colorado, with an oversample to reach a total of 162 voters in the Western Slope region. For the statewide sample, the margin of error at the 95% level is plus or minus 4.6%. In the Western Slope is plus or minus 7.7%. In some cases, these results are compared to the September, 2013, Colorado statewide poll. This research was conducted by the bipartisan research team of Keating Research and Public Opinion Strategies. This memo also references a January 2015 bipartisan survey conducted in part by Public Opinion Strategies among 400 Colorado voters (margin of error of plus or minus 4.9%) conducted on behalf of Colorado College State of the Rockies project.

The key findings of the survey include:

1. The Most Important Goals for the Statewide Water Plan: Keeping Colorado's Rivers and Streams Healthy and Flowing - and - Improving Water Conservation

Colorado voters think we need a change in how we use and manage water. When asked to think about how we use and manage water here in Colorado, a two-thirds majority (**67%**) say that we need *a lot* or *some* change, while only **11%** want the status quo - *little* or *no change*.



How would voters formulate a state water plan?

When told that the Colorado Water Conservation Board is developing the first ever statewide water plan, **91%** of voters say it is an *extremely* or *very* important priority to **Keep Colorado's rivers and streams healthy and flowing**. In the West Slope Counties **92%** say it is important.

In fact, 3-of-4 voters describe Colorado's

rivers as being "At Risk" – particularly those who are closest to our rivers: Sportsmen (**77%** say rivers are At Risk) and those who live in the rural areas (**79%** say rivers are at risk.)

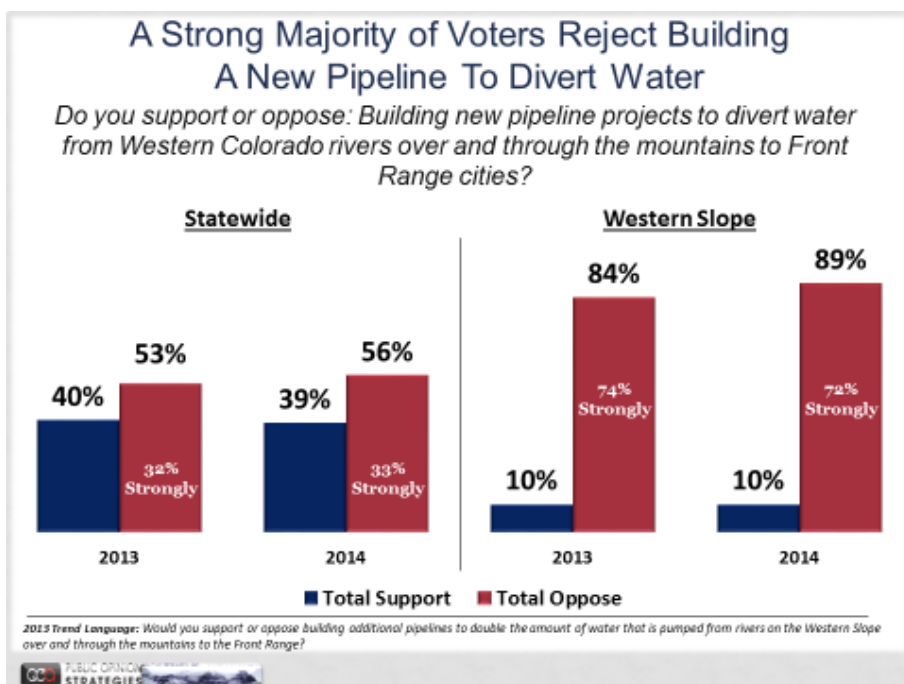
The second most important priority is **Improving water conservation and recycling of water in Colorado cities and towns**. (**78%** statewide say it's *extremely* or *very* important)

Ranked a close third is **Modernizing and helping provide greater flexibility for farmers and ranchers in how they use water**. (**76%** statewide say it's *extremely* or *very* important)



Voters believe that if these are the goals of the water plan, it will have a positive effect on *future generations (88% positive)*, *fish and wildlife (83% positive)*, *farms and ranches (78% positive)*, *opportunities to hunt, fish, boat, hike and enjoy outdoor recreation on Colorado’s rivers (76% positive)* and *Colorado’s economy and jobs (75% positive)*.

2. A Majority of Colorado Voters and 9 of 10 West Slope Voters Oppose Building A New Pipeline To Divert Water From Western Colorado To The Front Range



A majority **56%** of voters oppose the idea of building new pipeline projects to divert water from Western Colorado rivers over and through the mountains to Front Range cities, while only **39%** support it.

Voters are now more opposed to diversions than they were just one year ago. In 2013, **53%** of voters opposed these diversions. **In the Western Slope this diversion idea is overwhelmingly opposed by 9-of-10 voters (89%), while only 10% of support it.**

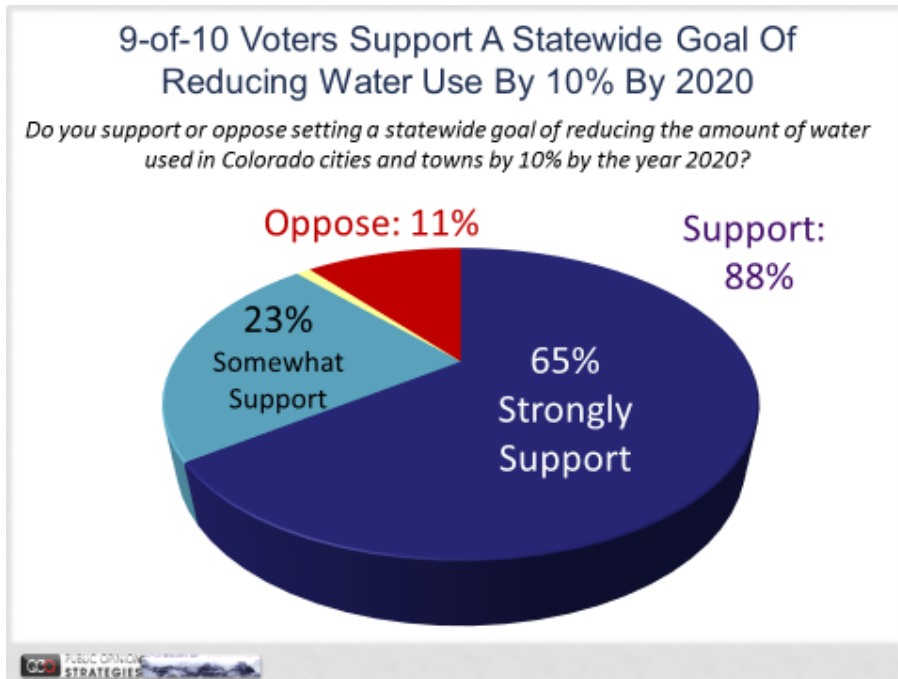
When given a choice in how we address future water shortages, voters choose conservation over diversion by more than a four-to-one margin. Fully, **78%** of voters say “we can use our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging more water conservation, reducing use, and increasing the recycling of water” - while only **17%** say “we should divert water from rivers, mostly in western Colorado to the Front Range communities where most people live.”

The preference for conservation over diversion of water from Western Colorado rivers to Front Range cities is not a partisan issue: Registered Democrats (**85%** conserve; 13% divert), Unaffiliated voters (**75%** conserve; 19% divert), and Republicans (**72%** conserve; 21% divert) all agree.

Importantly, the 2015 Colorado College State of the Rockies survey found a nearly identical preference among Colorado voters as 74% said they would prefer “state water officials invest more time and resources in pursuing” a strategy of “encouraging more water conservation, reducing use and increasing recycling” over “diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state” (16%).



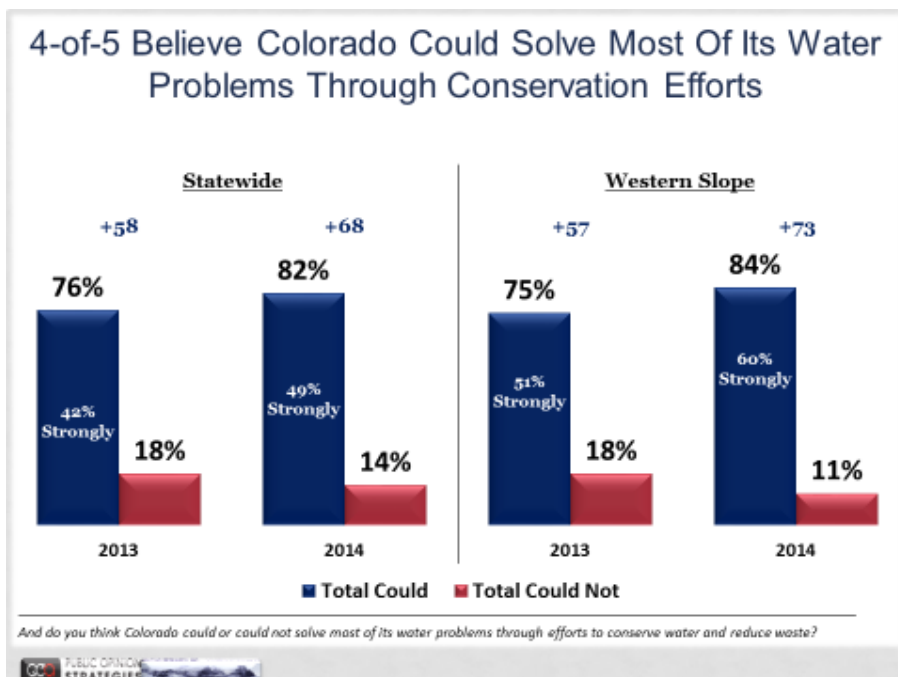
3. Coloradans Overwhelmingly Support A Statewide Goal of Reducing Water Usage By 10% by 2020.



A strong majority **88%** of voters support the idea of setting a statewide goal of reducing the amount of water used in Colorado cities and towns by 10% by the year 2020, including **65%** that strongly support the idea - while only **11%** oppose it.

In the Western Slope the goal of reducing water by 10% by 2020 receives near universal **94%** support.

This water use reduction goal is supported by strong majorities across all political persuasions: Registered Democrats (**99%** support), Unaffiliated (**87%** support), and Republicans (**79%** support) and around the state: Western Slope (**94%** support), Eastern Plains (**88%** support), Colorado Springs (**73%** support), Denver (**96%** support) and in the Suburbs (**90%** support).

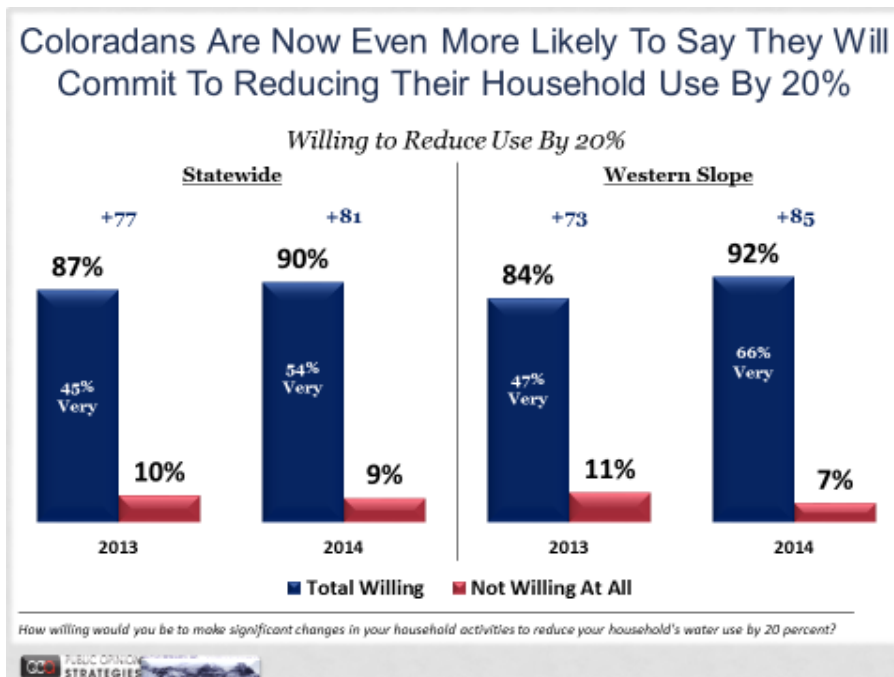


In addition, voters overwhelmingly agree we could solve our water problems through conservation and reducing waste.

Fully, eight of ten voters (**82%**) say Colorado could solve most of its water problems through efforts to conserve water and reduce waste – a view that is even stronger today than one year ago (**76%** say could in 2013) - while only **14%** say we cannot solve our problems through conservation.



4. Voters Are Willing To Take Action To Decrease Their Water Usage by Reducing Waste.



Nine-of-ten voters say they are very willing to make significant changes in their household activities to reduce their water use by 20%, including over half (54% who say they are *very willing* to make changes to reduce their household's water use.

The 54% *very willing* we see today is a significant bump up in voter appetite from what we saw just one year ago when 45% were *very willing*, and even more

so on the Western Slope where 66% are *very willing* to make significant changes in their household activities to reduce water use, compared to 47% *very willing* in 2013.

The vast majority of Coloradans say they are willing to take specific actions that reduce their water use by 20% - including the top three which can effectively reduce water waste:

The Vast Majority Of Coloradans Say They Are Willing To Take Actions That Reduce Water Waste

Please tell me if you would be very willing, somewhat willing, not too willing, or not at all willing to undertake that action to reduce water use by 20%?

	Willing / Already Do	Total Willing	Already Do
Having a water audit to identify leaks and other ways to reduce water waste	85%	76%	9%
Installing rain sensors which automatically shut off sprinkler systems after adequate rainfall	67%	54%	13%
Making sure that any new appliances you purchase are water efficient	94%	52%	41%
Using more native, drought-tolerant plants or other water wise landscaping in your yard or garden	83%	52%	31%
Installing more efficient toilets	91%	45%	46%
Reducing the amount you water your lawn or garden	83%	46%	37%
Installing low-flow equipment on showers and faucets	88%	45%	43%
Watering your lawn or garden early or late in the day	85%	27%	57%
Going to a car wash instead of washing your car in your driveway	88%	35%	54%

- Having a water audit to identify leaks and other ways to reduce water waste. (85% willing or already do it);
- Installing rain sensors which automatically shut off sprinkler systems after adequate rainfall. (67% willing or already do it);
- Making sure that any new appliances you purchase are water efficient (94% willing or already do it).



When it comes to water use on farms and ranches, **94%** support modernizing irrigation used for farms and ranches to make more efficient use of existing water supplies, including **70%** that strongly support it.

5. Voters Express Concern Regarding Our Rivers And Want to Protect Them For The Future.

Fully 82% of Colorado voters in the State of the Rockies survey conducted in January 2015 say that the “low level of water in rivers” is a serious problem facing the state. That equals concerns about economic issues for the first time in that survey’s history, as a statistically equivalent 83% say “unemployment” is a serious problem.

While Coloradans express concern about rivers for many reasons, it is clear from the research that they want them to be protected for their children and grandchildren. There is near unanimity that “we need to conserve water so that future generations of Coloradans can enjoy outdoor recreation opportunities on Colorado’s rivers (92% agree; 64% strongly agree).

The issue of water matters to Colorado voters. This poll shows that voters understand the importance of conserving and preserving our rivers and streams for future generations. They believe that we can accomplish a goal to reduce water usage by 10% by 2020 through conservation and eliminating waste, and not by building new diversion projects. Moreover, they say that water belongs to everyone and we can all do our part to conserve water so future generations can enjoy it.