

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Department of Natural Resources

Bill Owens, Governor

Russell George, DNR Executive Director

Rod Kuharich, CWCB Director

April 2004

HB 04-1365: WATER CONSERVATION

Background

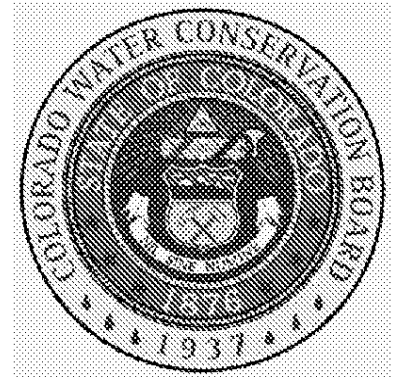
The Water Conservation Act of 1991 (HB 1154) established the **Office of Water Conservation** within the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to promote water use efficiency. Provisions of the 1991 Act require “covered entities”, who are water providers that annually supply over 2000 acre-feet of water to retail customers, to develop water conservation plans. Covered entities must have an approved water conservation plan prior to receiving any financial assistance from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) or the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority (CWRPDA).

HB 04-1365

HB 1365 improves upon the Water Conservation Act of 1991 by enhancing the elements that must be considered by a covered entity when creating a water conservation plan. The new provisions will establish water savings goals and provide a better indication to the overall effectiveness of the entities water conservation plan. The new planning provisions reflect common practices that are being used in other western states.

HB 1365 creates a grant mechanism from an existing funding source (CWCB severance tax operational account) that will allow water entities to apply for grants to assist them with water conservation and drought planning activities.

Additionally, HB 1365 makes changes to the duties of the Office of Water Conservation to reflect the state’s involvement in drought mitigation planning and the need to provide more information relating to drought and water conservation to water users and the public.



Highlights

- *Enhances current water conservation planning activities to improve the effectiveness of water conservation efforts.*
- *Provides grants to water entities to assist them to develop water conservation or drought mitigation plans.*

HB 1365

Water Conservation by Retail Water Providers

- Requires covered entities who are seeking state financing to develop water conservation plans using new criteria as indicated in HB 1365. Contains a two-year phase-in period to allow entities ample time to develop plans.
- Will establish water savings goals and provide a better indication to the overall effectiveness of the entities water conservation plan. The new planning provisions reflect common practices that are being used in other western states.
- Adds industrial and agricultural water users to the list of water users in which the Office can provide information and technical assistance relating to water conservation and drought.
- Allows the Office to review previously submitted water conservation plans to make comparisons with new water conservation guidelines and offer technical or financial assistance to improve deficiencies.
- Establishes drought mitigation activities within the Office.
- Requires the Office to work with local governments and other water entities to develop drought mitigation plans.
- Requires the Office to act as a statewide information repository for water conservation and drought information.
- Requires the Office to disseminate water conservation and drought mitigation information to water providers and the public.
- Amends the current public review and approval provision to allow more flexibility at the local level.
- Requires the CWCB to develop guidelines describing how plans will be reviewed, approved, and how grant funds will be distributed.
- Contains an emergency provision to allow a covered entity that does not have an approved water conservation plan to receive emergency financial assistance from the state.

House Votes:

Local Affairs Committee- (11,0)
Appropriations Committee- (10,0,1)
Final Vote- (59,5,1,0)

Senate Votes:

ANR&E Committee – (7,0)
Appropriations Committee – (10,0)
Final Vote- (35-0)

For more information about this or other water resource topics you can contact the CWCB at:
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721, Denver, CO, 80203
Phone: (303) 866 3441. FAX: (303) 866-4474.
Internet: www.cwcb.state.co.us.