



## HB19-1029

**SHORT TITLE:** Republican River Water Conservation District

**LONG TITLE:** Concerning the Republican River Water Conservation District, and, in connection therewith, expanding the boundaries of the district and adjusting the meeting schedule of the district's board of directors

**SPONSORS:** Rep. Arndt/Sen. Crowder (Water Resources Review Committee bill)

**COMMITTEES:** House Rural Affairs & Agriculture Committee

**PURPOSE OF THE BILL:** To adjust the boundaries of the Republican River Water Conservation District and adjust the meeting schedule to a time more convenient for agricultural members. Would work in conjunction with rules being adopted by State Engineer's Office.

**PROPONENTS:** State Engineer's Office? Well owners within the district who currently bear full cost of compliance

**POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS:** Members of the district who are paying for the expenses related to construction of pipeline and pumping in order to comply with the Settlement reached in 2003; well owners whose wells contribute to stream depletion but are not currently included in the district.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2003 a settlement and stipulation were reached among parties to a dispute over stream depletions on the Republican River in NE Colorado and Nebraska. As a result, water rights were purchased and a pipeline constructed to deliver water to parties in Nebraska. A water conservation district was formed to assess costs to fund compliance. The boundaries of the district do not include wells in Cheyenne county whose pumping impacted stream depletions and are therefore not carrying a share of the compliance costs. This bill seeks to more fairly assess the costs of compliance by enlarging the district to include those wells. The board of directors would be expanded to include representatives from Cheyenne county. and to modify the meeting schedule avoid the most intensive agricultural work schedules (planting, harvesting, etc.).

**Is this bill necessary this year?** There is no deadline

**How does the bill change current law?** Expands district boundaries, adds two members to district board, and modifies meeting schedule

**Does the bill affect the prior appropriations system?** No but in conjunction with new rules would require well owners now coming into the district to obtain augmentation water as an alternative to paying district fees.

**How is the bill implemented?** It is unclear whether this is self-executing or requires rulemaking in the State Engineer's office. It may require changes in rules or practices of water districts newly included within the boundaries.

**Practical considerations:**

**Fiscal Impact:** No fiscal impact statement

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