

CORY GARDNER  
4TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE  
ENERGY AND POWER SUBCOMMITTEE  
ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SUBCOMMITTEE  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0604

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The Honorable Michael L. Connor  
Commissioner  
Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington DC 20240

The Honorable Jo Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
for Civil Works  
108 Army Pentagon  
Room 3E446  
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Commissioner Connor and Assistant Secretary Darcy:

Recently, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) issued their March 2012 precipitation study for Colorado. This study illustrated that snowpack totals for Colorado are well below average this winter. As you know, Colorado experienced a major drought in 2002 and precipitation levels in 2012 are strikingly similar. As a result, municipal and agriculture water users have serious fears about the possibility of severe drought. In 2002, Colorado experienced a catastrophic wildfire season. Ten years later, we have already seen several devastating fires.

According to NRCS, the snowpack level is currently 42 percent below average from previous year's data. In 2002, snowpack levels were at 44 percent below average for a normal March and conditions did not improve for the year. As a result, two of Colorado's key economic drivers, agriculture and tourism, suffered. In particular, many farms could not produce adequate crop yields and municipalities placed water usage restrictions on residents. With the data of the recent NRCS snowpack study, many Colorado residents are concerned.

In order to best gauge the effect this drought may have on Colorado, please provide answers to the following questions. What has either department done since 2002 regarding drought preparedness in Colorado? Has the Bureau of Reclamation or the Army Corp of Engineers put in place solutions since 2002 to assist the state in the event that a drought does in fact occur? What additional water storage projects have been opened or put on-line since 2002? What is the timeline for proposed water project approvals in Colorado?

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to both department's providing practices and programs regarding your work over the past ten years.

Sincerely,



Cory Gardner  
Member of Congress (CO-4)