

## Concerns for pipeline shown

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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Dear Editor,

At the last meeting of the RRWCD, John Willard gave an excellent power point of the feasibility projections to actual cost of the pipeline. In November 2007, GE1, the engineering company, projected a cost estimate range of \$61.3 million to \$71.3 million. This includes the cost of the water and pipeline. It's on track to complete the project at \$67.4 million.

—Total water rights \$49,121,105.

—Construction of pipeline \$14,323,887.

—Easements \$253,846.

—Reclamations \$500,000. —Other costs \$190,912.

—Legal fees \$384,363.

—Slattery, design engineer \$203,486.

—Other expenses \$68,320.

The debt is scheduled to be paid off by 2029. This is how your hard-earned dollars are at work.

Do not read the rest of this article unless you are sitting down.

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The RRWCD owns some 16,000 acre feet of water, but the Sandhill Ground Water District position is the RRWCD cannot have that water until Kansas agrees to the pipeline. My contacts tell me Kansas is going to hang tough, and the Sandhill Ground Water District is doing likewise. I commend the Sandhill Ground Water District for standing up and forcing the RRWCD to do what is right.

I understand that if any agreement is reached between Sandhill Ground Water District and the RRWCD that any water from the pipeline can only be used for compact compliance, but I would like one other stipulation, and that is no water from the Sandhill Ground Water District until all three states agree on what percentage of the pipeline water goes toward compact compliance. I predict it will never be 100 percent.

The RRWCD is in a tough situation, and they brought this problem on themselves by not listening to reality. I and some others advised them early on to first get an appraisal of the water.

Next get an option with money down and in escrow. Next get all three states to agree on the pipeline, get all three states to agree on percentage of water that goes toward compact compliance.

Get the easements, get Sandhill Ground Water District to release the water and get the necessary funding, and then RRWCD would not be in the jam you are in today.

What is the solution? There might not be a solution. If there is one it will be going toward the U.S. Supreme Court. Congress gave the U.S. Supreme Court jurisdiction back in the 1800s on inter-states compact issues. Can any court force Kansas to agree to a pipe line or force Sandhill Ground Water District to release water?

The attorneys are going to have a picnic in the future on this one, and the irrigated farmers on the Republican basin will be stuck with the bill, and the State of Colorado will be sitting on the sidelines when really it is the state's responsibility to meet compact compliance.

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We, the citizens of the Republican basin, had no say in the 1942 compact and no say in the three state agreements of 2002. Also we have no vote on who represents us or how the RRWCD spends our money. We all will have to live with these mistakes far into the future, and will anyone be held accountable? Probably not. These are my comments, and no one else was a part of this article.

Milton E. Mekelburg

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