

Donala Water and Sanitation District, April 17

Board opposes “public trust initiative” ballot issue

By Jim Kendrick

On April 17, the Donala Water and Sanitation District board unanimously approved a resolution opposing a statewide November ballot initiative on the proposed “public trust doctrine” regarding the water of Colorado.

The district also received confirmation in an April 10 state water quality “sanitary survey” inspection report regarding a March 13 inspection by the Water Quality Control Division that there were no “significant deficiencies” or “other violations” found in Donala’s drinking water treatment facilities. The report contained eight comments regarding observations on administrative activities and recommendations for small facility upgrades; none were related to the district’s water production or treatment systems. No response was required for these eight comments.

Donala General Manager Kip Petersen was absent. Office Manager Betsy Bray introduced new water operator Joe Lopez to each of the members of the board.

Resolution details

Some of the items noted in the district’s public trust doctrine resolution regarding Colorado natural resources, including state waters, were:

- This is a new version of previously failed public trust ballot initiatives.
- This initiative will jeopardize Donala’s use of costly critical water supplies, create uncertainty, and hurt the economy.
- It will attack private property, land, and water rights, leading to great expansion of litigation and frivolous lawsuits.
- It will allow uncontrolled access to streams and rivers across private lands, damage sensitive streambeds and banks, could lead to dangerous and unsafe conditions, and cause conflicts with property owners.
- It will stop necessary water storage projects.
- Adoption of a public trust doctrine is unwise, unnecessary, disruptive to the fair and responsible allocation and stewardship of Colorado’s scarce water

resources, and an unwarranted taking of vested property interests.

Manager’s report

Some of Petersen’s prepared remarks in his written manager’s report were:

- Chief Water Operator Mark Parker advised him that the April 10 document is the “cleanest” inspection report that Donala has ever received.
- I can’t say enough good things about” Parker and op-

erators Ronny Wright and Troy Vialpando, and Robert Hull, district superintendent, who are responsible for these “outstanding” March 13 inspection results.

- The Donala main office will again be the May 6 dis-

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