

**Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fourth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**ENGROSSED**

LLS NO. R24-1027.01 Jessica Wigent x3701

**HJR24-1018**

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 24-1018**

101     **CONCERNING THE WATER CLARITY OF GRAND LAKE, COLORADO'S**  
102             **LARGEST AND DEEPEST NATURAL LAKE.**

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1             WHEREAS, Grand Lake is Colorado's largest and deepest natural  
2             lake and part of the headwaters to the Colorado River; and

3             WHEREAS, Located near the Continental Divide in the  
4             Headwaters of the Colorado River, Grand Lake receives direct, natural  
5             inflow of pristine, high-quality waters, which make it an important asset  
6             and a natural wonder of the state and nation; and

7             WHEREAS, Grand Lake is used as a component of the  
8             Colorado-Big Thompson (C-BT) Project authorized by the United States  
9             Congress in 1937; and

10            WHEREAS, The C-BT Project collects water from the Upper  
11            Colorado River Basin, including Shadow Mountain Reservoir, and Lake  
12            Granby just downstream of Grand Lake, and involves pumping water  
13            from these downstream reservoirs into Grand Lake and through the Alva  
14            B. Adams Tunnel to northeastern Colorado; this process reverses the  
15            natural flow of water and thereby results in less pristine reservoir water

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.*  
*Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

HOUSE  
Amended Final Rdg  
February 26, 2024

1 being introduced into Grand Lake; and

2 WHEREAS, Senate Document No. 80, 75th Congress, 1st Session,  
3 authorized the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to construct the  
4 C-BT Project; and

5 WHEREAS, The U.S. Congress, when it authorized the funding  
6 to construct the elements of the C-BT in 1937, acknowledged the need to  
7 preserve Grand Lake, the Colorado River, and Rocky Mountain National  
8 Park by requiring, through the authorization language codified in Senate  
9 Document No. 80, that the C-BT "must be operated in such a manner to  
10 most nearly affect the following primary purposes:

- 11 1. To preserve the vested and future rights in irrigation.
- 12 2. To preserve the fishing and recreational facilities and the  
13 scenic attractions of Grand Lake, the Colorado River and Rocky  
14 Mountain National Park.
- 15 3. To preserve the present surface elevations of the water in  
16 Grand Lake and to prevent a variation in these elevations greater  
17 than their normal fluctuation.
- 18 4. To so conserve and make use of these waters for irrigation,  
19 power, industrial development, and other purposes, as to create the  
20 greatest benefit.
- 21 5. To maintain conditions of river flow for the benefit of  
22 domestic and sanitary uses of this water."; and

23 WHEREAS, The C-BT, as authorized by Senate Document No. 80  
24 and operated by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District in  
25 collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, provides  
26 supplemental water for irrigation to more than 120 ditches and 60  
27 reservoirs, serves 29 Colorado communities with municipal and industrial  
28 water, and generates electric power that is marketed by the Western  
29 Division of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program from six power  
30 plants; Grand Lake also diverts water that serves over one million  
31 Coloradans and 615,000 acres of agricultural land, which includes parts  
32 of the Greater Denver-Metropolitan Area; and

33 WHEREAS, In 2008, the Colorado Water Quality Control  
34 Commission (WQCC) adopted a narrative and 4-meter numeric clarity  
35 standard (with a delayed effective date) - the first of its kind in Colorado  
36 - in an attempt to improve the clarity of the water in Grand Lake; and

37 WHEREAS, In 2014, the WQCC amended the 2008 Grand Lake

1 Clarity narrative standard to provide that Grand Lake achieve "[t]he  
2 highest level of clarity attainable, consistent with the exercise of  
3 established water rights, the protection of aquatic life, and protection of  
4 water quality throughout the Three Lakes System" and in 2016  
5 subsequently adopted clarity goal qualifiers of a 3.8 meter (12.5 feet)  
6 average depth and 2.5 meter (or 8.2 feet) daily minimum depth to be met  
7 throughout the most important recreational season - from July 1 to  
8 September 11 - the times when most pumping from downstream  
9 reservoirs occurs delivering water to Grand Lake; and

10 WHEREAS, Northern Water has a contractual relationship with  
11 the United States, as defined by its 1938 Repayment Contract and  
12 subsequent 2013 Clarity Supplement, that outlines their commitment "to  
13 identify and evaluate factors that affect clarity in Grand Lake and to  
14 develop a plan in accordance with this Supplement to meet the applicable  
15 water clarity standards"; and

16 WHEREAS, In furtherance of the 2013 Clarity Supplement, and  
17 in acknowledging the importance of developing a larger cooperative  
18 action to address Grand Lake water clarity, in 2016, the U.S. Bureau of  
19 Reclamation, the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, the  
20 Grand County Board of Commissioners, the Northwest Colorado Council  
21 of Governments, and the Colorado River Water Conservation District  
22 signed the "Grand Lake Clarity Stakeholders' Memorandum of  
23 Understanding" (MOU) "to establish an adaptive management process for  
24 clarity in Grand Lake, to occur concurrent with Reclamation's exploration  
25 of alternatives to improve clarity in Grand Lake consistent with federal  
26 Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines that guide federal investments  
27 in water resources, which MOU was extended to 2026"; and

28 WHEREAS, Since the adoption of the clarity goal qualifiers and  
29 the 2016 MOU, Grand Lake Adaptive Management (GLAM) has had  
30 some measurable improvements in Grand Lake clarity and an improved  
31 understanding of the relationship between water quality and operations  
32 that has informed the process, although Grand Lake has not consistently  
33 achieved the water clarity goals in the WQCC's standard because annual  
34 snowpack and rainfall are still major contributing factors to Grand Lake  
35 water clarity; and

36 WHEREAS, Grand County's economy relies on outdoor  
37 recreation, tourism, and agriculture, and the Grand County Tourism  
38 Board reported visitor days in July, August, and September totaled 4.3

1 million in 2022 and 3.7 million in 2023; and

2 WHEREAS, The collaborative efforts to improve the clarity of the  
3 water in Grand Lake, although laudable and ongoing, may be insufficient  
4 to consistently meet the clarity-goal qualifiers for Grand Lake; now,  
5 therefore,

6 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the*  
7 *Seventy-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate*  
8 *concurring herein:*

9 That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly:

10 (1) Recognize the importance of Grand Lake and its unique water  
11 clarity as an aesthetic, recreational, wildlife, tourist, economic, and  
12 historic asset to the state and nation;

13 (2) Recognize the importance of the C-BT project for essential  
14 water deliveries to Colorado's northern Front Range and plains region and  
15 economy; and

16 (3) Urge the collaborating entities of the 2016 MOU to continue  
17 their efforts to establish effective, measurable, demonstrable, and  
18 achievable short- and long-term solutions to increase the clarity depths in  
19 Grand Lake and meet state-issued clarity standards.

20 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent  
21 to the Town of Grand Lake; Governor Jared Polis; Dan Gibbs, Executive  
22 Director of the Department of Natural Resources; Congressman Joe  
23 Neguse; Senator Michael Bennet; Senator John Hickenlooper; Grand  
24 Lake Adaptive Management (GLAM); the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation;  
25 the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District; the Grand County  
26 Board of Commissioners; the Northwest Colorado Council of  
27 Governments; and the Colorado River Water Conservation District.