

Sound off

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THE MAN behind a speculative water pipeline project will be holding public meetings in Lamar this Tuesday and the following Tuesday.

The proposal is to suck large amounts of water out of the Arkansas River near Lamar by way of a 150-mile pipeline to El Paso and Elbert counties. The man behind this scheme is Karl Nyquist.

He's head of the Elbert and Highway 86 Commercial Metro District, which was created in 2002 to serve residential and commercial needs in the Wild Pointe subdivision, which consists of a grand total of only 39 acres. He's been trying to expand its scope to statewide projects rather than local sources of water.

Mr. Nyquist appears to have a clear conflict of interest because he's also the CEO of C&A Co., a development company that is negotiating with the metro district to handle some of its infrastructure needs, and the CEO of the GP Water Group, which is proposing to build a 24-inch diameter pipeline to take water it has purchased out of the Lamar Canal.

Mr. Nyquist says customers would include the Cherokee Water and Sanitation District near Colorado Springs, and potentially other users in Elbert and El Paso counties. The pipeline would transport up to 12,000 acre-feet of water out of the Arkansas Valley each year.

Alan Hamel, executive director of the Pueblo Board of Water Works and a member of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, opposes such a pipeline to dry up farms in the Lower Arkansas Valley. And he is rightfully concerned that this scheme has been developed secretly until it was exposed just recently at a meeting of the Elbert County commissioners.

This latest scheme typifies the attitude of many Front Range speculators toward those of us in the Arkansas Valley. It should be strongly opposed by all in the Valley.

This proposal is an echo of a similar one by the Colorado Interstate Gas Co., which wanted to suck Arkansas River water north by pipeline to the Denver metro area. Thankfully, then-Gov. Roy Romer drove a stake through the heart of that plan.

We hope that Gov. John Hickenlooper will likewise intercede. This proposal reeks of conflict of interest on the part of the organizations controlled by Mr. Nyquist, just as it reeks of water speculation that the courts have found to be illegal.

The two meetings in Lamar will be held at the Lamar Community Building, 610 S. Sixth St. We urge all who oppose drying up more prime farmland in the Lower Arkansas Valley to attend and voice your opposition in no uncertain terms.

It's time that the dry-up of our region's agricultural economy be halted, lest our children and grandchildren be left with a weed-infested desert. This proposed project is outright speculative and should not be allowed.