

Gardner announces plans for water storage legislation

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Rep. Cory Gardner, Republican from the 4th Congressional District, led a water storage tour in Weld County on Friday and announced he would be introducing new legislation when Congress returns from its summer work period.

Gardner said in a statement, "Thank you to the many local and state officials who participated in the water storage tour this morning in Weld County and joined me in discussing the need for increased water storage in Colorado. The large presence of leaders in attendance demonstrates the need for immediate action on this issue.

He added, "Water is one of the main drivers of economic growth in Colorado, and every industry in the state relies on this vital resource. I wish the federal government fostered a regulatory environment in which tours like the one I led this morning were not necessary, but that is simply not the case. The federal government has continued to stall important projects like NISP because of a permitting process in Washington, D.C., that creates bureaucratic regulatory barriers.

"The ongoing problems with water storage are why I plan to introduce a bill when Congress returns from its summer work period that fixes the broken permitting system."

He said the legislation would establish an Office of Water Storage at the Army Corps of Engineers that would serve as the central hub for permitting decisions.

This new office would coordinate with all agencies involved in the permitting and approval process for storage. The legislation would not call for circumvention of environmental reviews, but rather it sets a workable time frame for an initial decision to be made on whether or not a project can move forward.

Gardner said, "I stand ready to work with any willing partners on this issue that is so important to all of Colorado and its communities."