



COLORADO
Division of Water Resources
Department of Natural Resources
Colorado Ground Water Commission

March 2, 2022

John Green
El Paso County Development Services Department
DSDcomments@elpasoco.com

RE: Winsome Filing No. 3
Part of Sec. 24, T11S, R65W, 6th P.M. and Part of the W ½ of the W ½ of Sec. 19, T11S,
R64W, 6th P.M.
Water Division 1, Water District 1
Kiowa-Bijou Designated Basin

Dear Mr. Green:

We have reviewed your February 3, 2022 submittal concerning the above referenced proposal to subdivide 366 acres into 38 residential lots. Our office previously commented on the McCune Ranch Preliminary Plan (containing 766.66 acres) in a letter dated May 3, 2019, of which the Winsome Filing No. 3 is a portion.

Water Supply Demand

According to the submitted Water Resources Report for Winsome Filing No. 3 dated May 2021 and revised September 2021 (“Water Resources Report”) the total estimated water requirement is 22.8 acre-feet/year. The estimated water requirement of 0.6 acre-feet/year per residential lot assumes that 0.3 acre-foot per year is required for domestic indoor use, 0.25 acre-feet per year is required for irrigation of up to 4,000 square feet of lawn, garden and trees, and 0.05 acre-feet per year is required for watering of four large domestic animals.

Source of Water Supply

According to the Water Resources Report, the proposed source of water supply for the residential lots is individual on-lot wells producing from the not-nontributary Dawson Aquifer that would be permitted pursuant to Determination of Water Right no. 1692-BD and the associated Replacement Plan No. 1692-RP, No. 4.

Determination of Water Right no. 1692-BD was issued by the Ground Water Commission (“Commission”) on June 25, 2008 for an allowed average annual amount of withdrawal of ground water of 819 acre-feet from the Dawson Aquifer (based on an aquifer life of 100 years) to be used on 900.52 acres (which include the 366 acres of the subject subdivision). On March 13, 2018, the Commission approved Amendment No. 1 of Determination of Water Right no. 1692-BD which cancelled an allowed average annual withdrawal of 12 acre-feet from the Determination, leaving an allowed average annual amount of withdrawal of 807 acre-feet (based on an aquifer life of 100 years) in the Determination.

On August 27, 2021, the Commission approved Replacement Plan No. 1692-RP, No. 4, which cancelled Replacement Plan No. 1692-RP, No. 3, previously approved on December 1, 2020. Replacement Plan No. 1692-RP, No. 4, allows for the withdrawal of 37.8 acre-feet per year of ground



water from the Dawson aquifer for 300 years, through 63 wells to be located on 63 residential lots on 479.4 acres, of which the subject 366 acres is a part. The remaining 25 wells that are the subject of Replacement Plan No. 1692-RP, No. 4 are within Winsome Filing No. 2. Each well may withdraw 0.6 acre-feet per year of ground water to be used for use in one single family dwelling, the irrigation of landscape and lawn and gardens and the watering of domestic animals and stock. These allowed uses are consistent with the proposed uses specified in the Water Supply Report.

The proposed source of water for this development is a bedrock aquifer allocation from the Denver Basin. The State Engineer's Office does not have evidence regarding the length of time for which the bedrock aquifer sources will be a physically and economically viable source of water. According to 37-90-107(7)(a), C.R.S., "Permits issued pursuant to this subsection (7) shall allow withdrawals on the basis of an aquifer life of 100 years." Based on this allocation approach, the annual amount of water determined in Determination of Water Right No. 1692-BD is equal to one percent of the total amount, as determined by rule 5.3.2.1 of the Designated Basin Rules, 2 CCR 410-1. Therefore, the water may be withdrawn in those annual amounts for a maximum of 100 years.

The *El Paso County Land Development Code*, Section 8.4.7.(B)(7)(b) states:

"(7) Finding of Sufficient Quantity

(b) Required Water Supply. The water supply shall be of sufficient quantity to meet the average annual demand of the proposed subdivision for a period of 300 years."

The State Engineer's Office does not have evidence regarding the length of time for which this source will "meet the average annual demand of the proposed subdivision." However, treating El Paso County's requirement as an **allocation** approach based on three hundred years, the allowed average annual amount of withdrawal for the 38 wells of 22.8 acre-feet may be withdrawn in that amount for a maximum of 300 years, pursuant to Replacement Plan No. 1692-RP, No. 4.

The Water Resources Report submitted makes reference to other water rights, including those in the Denver, Arapahoe and Laramie-Fox Hills Aquifers under Determination of Water Right nos. 1691-BD, 1690-BD and 1689-BD, but those rights are not identified as a sources of water for the subdivision.

In our letter dated May 3, 2019 regarding the McCune Ranch Subdivision Preliminary Plan we noted that there is an existing small-capacity Dawson Aquifer well, permit no. 162283, with a permitted well location that would place it on the 766.6 acres. Well permit no. 162283 was issued on a tract of 40 acres described as the NW ¼ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 19, Twp. 11 S, Range 64 W, 6th P.M., without consideration of material injury to other water rights. According to the January 7, 2019 water resources report submitted with that referral request a search for the well structure was conducted on January 7, 2019, resulting in no evidence that the structure exists at or near the location depicted in the permit. In addition, the then owner of the property, Mary Sue Liss with McCune Ranch, indicated that she has never seen a well casing or structure since she has owned or lived on the property. Therefore it is believed that the well is not located on property. However, the developer agreed to abandon the well per Colorado Well Construction Rules and Regulations should the well structure be found during construction of the development. In the event that the well is located and plugged and abandoned the well owner must submit a Well Abandonment Report (Form GWS-09) available for download at: <https://dwr.colorado.gov/services/well-construction-inspection>.

State Engineer's Office Opinion

Based upon the above and pursuant to Sections 30-28-136(1)(h)(l), C.R.S., it is our opinion that the proposed water supply is adequate and can be provided without causing injury to water rights.

Our opinion that the water supply is **adequate** is based on our determination that the amount of water required annually to serve the subdivision is currently physically available, based on current estimated aquifer conditions.

Our opinion that the water supply can be **provided without causing injury** is based on our determination that the amount of water that is legally available on an annual basis, according to the statutory **allocation** approach, for the proposed uses on the subdivided land is greater than the annual amount of water required to supply existing water commitments and the demands of the proposed subdivision.

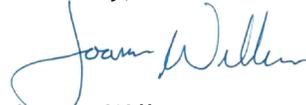
Our opinion is qualified by the following:

The Ground Water Commission has retained jurisdiction over the final amount of water available pursuant to the above-referenced decree, pending actual geophysical data from the aquifer.

The amounts of water in the Denver Basin aquifer, and identified in this letter, are calculated based on estimated current aquifer conditions. The source of water is from a non-renewable aquifer, the allocations of which are based on a 100 year aquifer life. The county should be aware that the economic life of a water supply based on wells in a given Denver Basin aquifer may be less than the 100 years (or 300 years) used for allocation due to anticipated water level declines. We recommend that the county determine whether it is appropriate to require development of renewable water resources for this subdivision to provide for a long-term water supply.

If you, or the applicant, have any questions, please contact Melissa van der Poel at 303-866-3581 ext. 8216.

Sincerely,



Joanna Williams
Water Resources Engineer

Ec: Division 1
Project no. 27576
Permit no. 162283

Winsome Filing 3.docx