



January 5, 2023

Ms. Kari Parsons
El Paso County Development Services Department
2880 International Circle, Suite 110
Colorado Springs, CO 80910
Sent via online portal at: <https://epcdevplanreview.com/Agencies/Home>

RE: Sterling Ranch East Phase One
Preliminary Plan
Sec. 34, Twp. 12S, Rng. 65W, 6th P.M.
Water Division 2, Water District 10
CDWR Assigned Subdivision No. 30428

Dear Ms. Parsons,

We have received a referral regarding the above-referenced proposal to subdivide a 321.4± acre tract of land into 761 single-family lots. The development would include 134.5 acres of single-family lots, 39.1 acres of road right-of-way, 147.7 acres of open space, including a community park and a future school site. According to the submittal, the proposed supply of water and wastewater disposal is to be served by the Sterling Ranch Metropolitan District No. 1/ Falcon Area Water and Wastewater Authority ("District").

Water Supply Demand

According to the Water Supply Information Sheet received by this office, the estimated water demand for the development is 255.02 acre-feet/year (based on the Districts SFE equivalency for high-density lots) for 761 residential lots, 9.88 acre-feet/year for commercial uses and 70.76 acre-feet/year for turf/native grass irrigation. The total estimated demand is 335.68 acre-feet/year. The wastewater will return to the District's central system.

Source of Water Supply

The source of water for the proposed development is to be served by the Sterling Ranch Metropolitan District No. 1/Falcon Area Water and Wastewater Authority. A letter of commitment for 335.68 acre-feet/year dated October 18, 2022 from the District was provided with the referral materials. According to the submittal, the District will provide water from Denver, Arapahoe and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifer wells to a central system utilizing the water rights shown in Table 1, below.



Table 1 - Denver Basin Ground Water Rights

Aquifer	Decree	Tributary Status	Volume (AF)	Annual Allocation 100 Year (AF/Year)	Annual Allocation 300 Year (AF/Year)
Laramie-Fox Hills	86CW19	NT	53,900	539	179.67
Laramie-Fox Hills	08CW113	NT	40	0.4	0.13
Laramie-Fox Hills	20CW3059	NT	2,780	27.80	9.27
Laramie-Fox Hills	1689-BD	NT	26,300	263	87.67
Arapahoe	85CW131	NT	47,400	474	158
Arapahoe	86CW18	NT	57,500	575	191.67
Arapahoe	93CW18	NT	74,250	742.5	247.5
Arapahoe	08CW113	NNT	60	0.60	0.20
Arapahoe	20CW3059	NNT	4,311	43.11	14.37*
Arapahoe	1690-BD	NT	39,800	398	132.67
Denver	85CW131	NT	18,700	187	62.33
Denver	93CW18	NT	37,581	375.81	124.11*
Denver	08CW113	NNT	72,893	728.93	242.98
Denver	20CW3059	NNT	4,556	45.56	15.19*
Denver	1691-BD	NT	51,300	513	171
Total			491,028	4,910.28	1,636.76

*The available water as decreed from 20CW3059 varies slightly from the rates in the submitted Water Resources Report.

According to 37-90-137(4)(b)(I), C.R.S., "Permits issued pursuant to this subsection (4) shall allow withdrawals on the basis of an aquifer life of one hundred years." Based on this allocation approach, the annual amounts of water decreed is equal to one percent of the total amount available as determined by Rules 8.A and 8.B of the Statewide Nontributary Ground Water Rules, 2 CCR 402-7. Therefore, the water may be withdrawn in those amounts for a maximum of 100 years.

In the *El Paso County Land Development Code*, effective November, 1986, Chapter 5, Section 49.5, (D), (2) states:

"-Finding of Sufficient Quantity - The water supply shall be of sufficient quantity to meet the average annual demand of the proposed subdivision for a period of three hundred (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 of 4,910.28 acre-feet/year would be reduced to one third of that amount, or 1,636.76 acre-feet/year, which is greater than the annual estimated commitments for the District. As a result, the water may be withdrawn in that annual amount for a maximum of 300 years.

Additional Comments

Should the development include construction and/or modification of any storm water structure(s), the applicant should be aware that, unless the structure can meet the requirements of a "storm water detention and infiltration facility" as defined in section 37-

92-602(8), Colorado Revised Statutes, the structure may be subject to administration by this office. The applicant should review DWR's *Administrative Statement Regarding the Management of Storm Water Detention Facilities and Post-Wildland Fire Facilities in Colorado*, located at <https://dnrweblink.state.co.us/dwr/ElectronicFile.aspx?docid=3576581&dbid=0> to ensure that the notification, construction and operation of the proposed structure meets statutory and administrative requirements. The applicant is encouraged to use *Colorado Stormwater Detention and Infiltration Facility Notification Portal*, located at <https://maperture.digitaldataservices.com/gvh/?viewer=cswdif>, to meet the notification requirements.

State Engineer's Office Opinion

Pursuant to the provision of C.R.S. 30-28-136(1)(h)(II), it is the opinion of this office that the proposed water supply is expected to be adequate and can be provided without injury to existing 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 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 is greater than the annual amount of water required to supply existing water commitments and the estimated demands of the proposed subdivision.

Our opinion is qualified by the following:

The Division 2 Water Court has retained jurisdiction over the final amount of water available pursuant to the above-referenced decrees, pending actual geophysical data from the aquifer.

The amounts of water in the Denver Basin aquifers, and identified in this letter, are calculated based on estimated current aquifer conditions. For planning purposes 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 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.

Should you or the applicant have questions regarding any of the above, please contact Kate Fuller of this office.

Sincerely,



Ivan Franco, P.E.
Water Resource Engineer

ec: Division 2 Engineer
District 10 Water Commissioner