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**INNOVATIVE PROJECT IN DENVER-AURORA METROPOLITAN AREA TAKES COLLABORATIVE
REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLANNING TO NEW LEVELS**

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ABSTRACT: The Water Infrastructure and Supply Efficiency (WISE) Project is a partnership among three water agencies in the Denver-Aurora Metropolitan area to collaboratively investigate the mutual benefits of sharing water supply infrastructure and water rights. These agencies include the Water Department for the City of Aurora, Colorado (Aurora Water), Denver Water Board (Denver Water), and the South Metro Water Supply Authority (South Metro). Each agency has a different mix of infrastructure and water supplies and varying vulnerabilities to different types of risk. Aurora Water has a diverse water rights portfolio. To maximize the benefits of this portfolio, a \$650 million pipeline and advanced water treatment plant was recently constructed to capture water that Aurora Water has rights to divert but has not historically utilized. This project was built predominately as a drought supply and is not fully utilized under all hydrology conditions. Therefore, Aurora has reduced its risk to drought, but at a significant cost. Denver Water has some of the most extensive and senior water rights in Colorado. The majority of these supplies originate from the mountains west of Denver. Although these supplies are reliable and of high quality, there is the risk of catastrophic failure of trans-mountain infrastructure and the potential negative impacts of large-scale forest fires. South Metro is a collection of water purveyors that rely predominately on a large network of non-renewable groundwater well fields. Although these wells have reliably produced large amounts of high quality water for many years, these supplies will not last forever and South Metro must secure a renewable water supply. The WISE Project investigates utilizing the available resources of each agency in innovative combinations. One example uses the new Aurora Water project to provide South Metro with renewable supplies during non-drought / non-emergency conditions. During drought or emergency conditions, Aurora Water and Denver Water would use the project and South Metro would return to using their groundwater wells and WISE supplies stored from previous years. This collaborative use of each other's resources mitigates risk and reduces cost for all three partners.

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