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Biden-Harris Administration breaks ground on Boone Reach trunk line of Arkansas Valley Conduit

Major water infrastructure project funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to provide clean, reliable drinking water to 50,000 Coloradans once completed

PUEBLO, Colo. – The Bureau of Reclamation today broke ground on the Boone Reach trunk line of the Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC), a major infrastructure project under President Biden’s Investing in America agenda that will bring clean, reliable drinking water to 39 communities in southeastern Colorado.

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Gary Gold and Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton joined local and Federal leaders at the groundbreaking ceremony where they highlighted the \$60 million investment provided through President Biden’s [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) for the project. When completed, the project’s 230 miles of pipeline will deliver as much as 7,500 acre-feet of water annually from Pueblo to Lamar, where water providers in Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, Prowers and Pueblo counties will serve a projected future population of 50,000.

“The results of the historic investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are evident here today as we see this project moving forward,” said **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Gary Gold**. “This project will bring a long-term, clean water supply to so many communities in southeastern Colorado.”

“Through the President’s Investing in America agenda, Reclamation is now well positioned to help advance these important water projects that have been paused for decades,” said **Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton**. “Our investment in this project, dedicated by President Kennedy more than 60 years ago, will provide the path forward for safe drinking water to so many residents of this area.”

“This long-awaited project is a vital step forward for the Arkansas Valley and shows what can be accomplished through a strong coalition of federal, state, and local partnerships,” said **Jeff Rieker, Eastern Colorado Area Manager**.

“Generations of people of the Lower Arkansas Valley have waited for the AVC for more than 60 years, and now with construction starting, we are seeing the realization of that dream,” said **Bill Long, President of the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District**. “This is the culmination of years of determination on the part of Reclamation, the District and the AVC participants to get this job done.”

“This is a truly monumental achievement and marks the culmination of decades of hard work, dedication, and collaboration by those who have devoted their lives to the business of water,” said **Seth Clayton**,

executive director of Pueblo Water. “Pueblo Water is proud to be an integral participant in this important time in history.”

The Arkansas Valley Conduit was part of the 1962 Fryingpan-Arkansas Project Act, and its construction represents the completion of the project. Once complete the project will replace current groundwater sources contaminated with radionuclides and help communities comply with Environmental Protection Act drinking water regulations. The connection point for AVC is at the east end of Pueblo Water’s system, at 36th Lane and U.S. Highway 50, and follows the Arkansas River corridor from Pueblo to Lamar, with spurs to Eads and Crowley County. Reclamation is building the trunk line, while the Southeastern District will build the spur and delivery lines. Estimated total cost is about \$600 million.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law allocates \$8.3 billion for Bureau of Reclamation water infrastructure projects over five years to advance drought resilience and expand access to clean water for families, farmers, and wildlife. The investment will repair aging water delivery systems, secure dams, and complete rural water projects, and protect aquatic ecosystems. The funding for this project is part of the \$1.05 billion in Water Storage, Groundwater Storage and Conveyance Projects provided by the Law.

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AVC at last!



Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton and Colorado Water Conservation Board Executive Director Becky Mitchell celebrate the beginning of construction on the Arkansas Valley Conduit on Friday, April 28, 2023. Photo by SECWCD



Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton speaks at the Arkansas Valley Conduit Boone Reach 1 Ground-breaking ceremony on Friday, April 28, 2023. Photo by SECWCD



Senator Michael Bennet (left), Colorado Water Conservation Board and Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District Board member Greg Felt (center) and Senator John Hickenlooper (right), celebrate the beginning of construction on the Arkansas Valley Conduit on Friday, April 28, 2023. Photo by SECWCD



Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District President Bill Long speaks at the Arkansas Valley Conduit Boone Reach 1 Groundbreaking ceremony on Friday, April 28, 2023. Photo by SECWCD



Department of Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Gary Gold speaks at the Arkansas Valley Conduit Boone Reach 1 Groundbreaking ceremony on Friday, April 28, 2023. Photo by SECWCD



From Left: SECWCD Board Member Dallas May, SECWCD President Bill Long, SECWCD Board Member and Pueblo Water Executive Director Seth Clayton, Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority Executive Director Keith McLaughlin, SECWCD Board Member Kevin Karney, Longtime SECWCD Employee Margie Medina, CWCB Executive Director Becky Mitchell, Senator John Hickenlooper, Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton, Senator Michael Bennet, Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary Gary Gold and Reclamation Deputy Commissioner Michael Brain break ground on the Arkansas Valley Conduit on Friday, April 28, 2023. SECWCD Photo