

# NEWS RELEASE

## Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

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### **Designation of Fully Appropriated River Basins, Subbasins, or Reaches Pursuant to LB 962**

The Department of Natural Resources has issued an Order of Final Determination of River Basins, Subbasins, or Reaches as Fully Appropriated, pursuant to Legislative Bill 962, the new law on the integrated management of surface water and ground water.

The Department's Order makes a final determination that the portions of each of the Platte River Basin upstream of the Loup River confluence, the North Platte River Basin, and the South Platte River Basin within each of the South Platte Natural Resources District, the Twin Platte Natural Resources District and the Central Platte Natural Resources District are fully appropriated. The Order states that the Department has determined ground water to be hydrologically connected to the surface water for purposes of the final fully appropriated determination in the entire geographic area of the South Platte Natural Resources District, the Twin Platte Natural Resources District, and the Central Platte Natural Resources District. As a result of the Order, stays that became effective on July 16, 2004 and July 26, 2004, on new uses of surface water and ground water within the areas described in the Order, were continued.

At this point, the Department and each of the affected local Natural Resources Districts must jointly develop an integrated management plan for surface and ground water use. The integrated management plan must include clear goals and objectives, a map delineating the geographic area subject to the plan, ground water controls, and surface water controls consistent with the requirements of LB 962. In developing an integrated management plan, the effects of existing and potential new water uses on existing surface water appropriators and ground water users must be considered.

LB 962 became effective on July 16, 2004. Under this law the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (Department) is still responsible for the administration of surface water rights and the Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) are still responsible for administering ground water uses.

On July 16, the Department provided notice to the South Platte NRD, Central Platte NRD, and Twin Platte NRD that the Department had made a preliminary determination that each of those districts is fully appropriated in its entirety.