

# Ronald D. Klein

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February 22, 2003

Doug Gruber  
42134 Rd 755  
Cozad, NE 69130

Reference: COHYST model project & CPNRD issues.

Dear Mr. Gruber:

I am a native of Gothenburg and own the family farm near there. I want to bring some concerns to your attention as a member of the Central Platte NRD Board of Directors.

I am extremely concerned about the manner in which the COHYST model project is being handled. I am enclosing a copy of the contents of a letter which I had published recently in the Gothenburg Times which was intended to explain those concerns. But, let me elaborate a little more.

It is my personal and professional opinion that this process is flawed. The amount of emphasis being placed on proof of this model appears totally inadequate. Unless very drastic - and necessary - changes are made to the approach to verification of the model, it will lead the Platte Valley to a potential economic disaster based on completely false assumptions causing totally wrong decisions on use of groundwater in the Valley.

The evasiveness demonstrated at the Nebraska Water Users meeting on January 15 is a red flag as to the deficiencies in this project approach. In my 35 years of engineering practice, I have never seen evasiveness regarding technical or process issues lead to anything but a disastrous result. Unless big changes are made, that is exactly where COHYST model is going to lead - to a disaster for the irrigators in the Platte Valley with all the resulting horrible economic consequences.

This is a difficult job. It is absolutely necessary that this model be **proven** to provide correct results that **completely match** a comprehensive set of properly defined and performed field tests. This must be based on **DEMONSTRATED FACTS** - not theory. I see no adequate plans for that.

Until that is done, this model must absolutely not - in any way - be used to form any basis for decisions on ANY matters affecting ground or surface water uses. I hope that the CPNRD will take action to see that is the case.

Please contact me if you have any questions on my concerns.

Very truly yours,

Ronald D. Klein  
Colorado PE 20748

COHYST model must be fixed  
LETTER TO EDITOR

by Ron Klein, Gothenburg native and landowner, Berthoud, CO  
February 15, 2003

Recent articles in The Times regarding the severe drought have been very informative. Like others, I am investing large sums in an irrigation well to insure an adequate irrigation water supply for this years crop.

A worse long-term threat to landowners comes from what I believe is a technically flawed project to develop the COHYST model to predict the effect of ground water pumping on Platte River flows. This is simply another step to give the bureaucrats complete control over use of irrigation wells. And, the project is technically flawed.

If this model is wrong, bad decisions will be made that will needlessly harm irrigators throughout the Platte Valley. Steps must be taken now to insure that does not happen.

The COHYST model was the subject of a recent article in The Times which described a presentation at the Jan. 15 meeting of the Nebraska Water Users Association in Lexington. I attended that meeting and presentation as a member of the NWU, a farm owner and with the inherent prospective of a life-long professional engineer who has been technically responsible for a wide variety of complicated projects. I know what has to be done to make sure engineering models are correct. Normally expected steps have not been adequately taken with COHYST.

In order to be sure the models are correct, they need to be verified against physical reality. Therein lies the problem with COHYST. The needed verification has not been done. Any plans (if there are any) to do so are inadequate.

As a result, the model will be essentially useless.

The style of presentation by the people presenting the modeling work was nicely done. Unfortunately, what they had to say does not stand up to normally expected scrutiny of their technical work. The "fluff" was nice, but there was inadequate substance. Substance is what matters.

I was extremely disappointed at their responses when I asked normally expected questions about what they had done to verify that their model gave correct results. Their responses were very evasive. I have seen others use such evasive methods to avoid accountability for the incomplete and potentially incorrect nature of their work and to keep that inadequacy from being discovered. When evasion is used, trouble lies ahead.

This is a serious matter that will harm us all if it not stopped now. The COHYST effort is technically flawed and absolutely must be fixed. Until that happens the bureaucrats behind it should absolutely not be allowed to use it for any decisions on irrigation matters. And, they need to prove it is correct--not just say it is. They have no apparent plan to do that to normally accepted professional standards.

It is time for irrigators, landowners, and other business interests in the Platte Valley to collectively act now to either force this work to be done correctly or be stopped. If this continues in the current manner we will all unnecessarily suffer. The bureaucrats will make bad decisions from a flawed COHYST model and control our futures while the rest of us pay the financial price for their (false) "success".