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Taking Water From the Farm: A Framework for Considering Transfers From Irrigation

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Abstract Submission to UCOWR for 2008 Meeting. Theme: Climate Change and Water
Submitted for oral presentation

Title: "Taking Water from the Farm: A Framework for Considering Transfers From Irrigation"

Abstract:

It is widely appreciated that water issues are disarmingly wide-ranging. As climate change stimulates transfers of water from irrigation applications, too many issues should be considered, from too many disciplinary perspectives. Worse yet, some are better understood than others, and some are very little studied. This presentation will undertake what J.K. Wright called "fool-rushery" (where angels fear to tread) in offering a framework for anticipation of issues, and assistance in development of resource management partnerships. Obviously, given time limits, this will feature selected highlights and topics of special concern. The three basic parts of the framework are (1) the range of issues relating to impacts on areas of origin caused by transfers, and kinds of information wanted to be able to adequately assess them; (2) the range of issues relating to opportunities for mitigation of impacts; and (3) the range of issues relating to ownership and resource management organization that may be desirable for improving economic efficiency and well-being by development of partnership arrangements. The set of challenges is worse than merely technically diverse; success or failure in successful reorganization of the critical human and natural resources affected by re-allocation of water may have profound political import. Tony Bebbington's "Five Capitals" (human, social, built, financial and natural) will be used to provide thematic links across the three issue areas. What progress is available since the U.S. 1962 Policies, Standards and Procedures...for... Development of Water and Related Land Resources? The value of taking a broad look is less in the accuracy of the details than in the case made for anticipatory and participatory planning for many reasons beyond only damage control and political legitimization.