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## **IES AWARDED FUNDS FOR PROJECT TO REDUCE CONTAMINANTS IN DRINKING WATER**

(Denver, Colorado) The Institute for Environmental Solutions (IES) today announced award of funds to advance a project to reduce and prevent pharmaceutical and personal care and household contaminants in Colorado water through collaborative action by state and local government, relevant industries, and the scientific community.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board awarded IES more than \$15,000 following favorable review of IES's proposal to conduct a pilot project to investigate community-based strategies to reduce the presence of pharmaceutical contaminants in local Colorado waterways.

“This award from the state's prestigious Healthy Rivers Fund will help us move forward with this important work,” said Carol Lyons, IES executive director. “There is clear evidence that very small concentrations of pharmaceutical and personal care and household product contaminants in drinking water are harmful to fish, and may be harmful to human health over the long term.”

Recent studies have shown the presence of small amounts of everyday drugs and other personal care products in both wastewater and drinking water supplies across the nation, including here in Colorado. IES is applying its unique approach to identify and solve the problem through its *Emerging Contaminants – Linking Science to Effective Action* project.

As part of this project, the Healthy Rivers Fund award will support a pilot project with two key objectives: 1) determining consumer behaviors that contribute to the sources of pharmaceuticals

and other emerging contaminants in drinking water, and 2) correlating these behaviors with contamination found through water sampling.

The pilot project will be conducted in the City of Golden. A statistically based design will be used to survey Golden residents regarding pharmaceutical and personal care product use and disposal. A targeted water quality sampling program will be conducted to identify the quantities and sources of emerging contaminants in Golden's wastewater. The project is designed to build the capacity and expertise of local government and community members to address community issues associated with emerging contaminants while simultaneously improving understanding of the Clear Creek watershed.

Pharmaceutical, personal care and household product pollutants are introduced into water supplies through several channels. When consumed, medication is absorbed by the body, but some passes through and is flushed down the toilet. Detergents and numerous other household products also go down the drain. Pharmaceuticals that are thrown in the trash by households or commercial establishments are released into the environment through leaching in landfills. Contamination is also contributed from flame retardants, industrial processes, and agriculture.

Based on the results of the pilot phase, larger scale remedies can be designed for wider application. A Stakeholder Advisory Committee comprising representatives from a wide spectrum of organizations, including local and state government agencies, academic researchers, medical professionals, drug manufacturers, ecologists, local health care providers, water providers, and water treatment facilities, has been established to guide the project. The pilot project schedule extends through September 2009.

The Institute for Environmental Solutions (IES) is a Denver-based non-project organization dedicated to addressing complex environmental challenges. IES uses sound, independent science to find potential solutions, develop objective evaluation methods, implement strategies, and measure and demonstrate costs and effectiveness. IES's approach emphasizes integration across technical disciplines and inclusion of all potential stakeholders throughout project design and implementation. For more information about the Emerging Contaminants Project and the Institute for Environmental Solutions, please visit [www.i4es.org](http://www.i4es.org).

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