



April 10, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Re: S.990 Platte River Recovery Implementation Program Extension Act

Dear Senator Barrasso:

On behalf of the Colorado Water Congress (CWC), we are writing in support of S.990, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the implementation of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program First Increment Extension for threatened and endangered species in the Central and Lower Platte Basin, and for other purposes. The CWC thanks you for sponsoring this legislation and continuing the effort to protect and maintain native species and their habitat on the Platte River.

The CWC is a non-profit organization established in 1958. With over 400 members, we serve as the principal voice of Colorado's water community and provide leadership on key water resource issues. We have a long history of supporting cooperative programs that protect and restore native species and their habitats.

The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Program), established in 1997, is a partnership between the states of Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska and the U.S. Department of Interior to manage the Platte River for the protection and maintenance of species and their habitats. Water users and conservation groups from the three states participate in this program, and many water users, represented by Colorado Water Congress, are among those participants.

The waters of the Platte River serve the people of Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska in many ways. Federal and non-federal water projects in the Platte River Basin, including 15 major dams, provide municipal and industrial water supplies for about 5 million people, irrigate millions of acres of farmland, and generate millions of dollars of hydroelectric power. These projects also provide flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Colorado's water users rely on the Program for the balance it provides between protecting existing and new water projects while complying with Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements. S.990 proposes to extend the period of time for the "First Increment," provide additional funding, and extend the Secretary of Interior's role in the Program. Through the bill's extension of the Program, water users have certainty regarding ESA compliance and the protection and maintenance of native species and their habitat on the Platte River, which is why we strongly support this bill.

Sincerely,

Douglas Kemper
Executive Director

Andy Colosimo
Federal Affairs Committee Chair

Chris Treese
Federal Affairs Committee Vice Chair