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June 21, 2019

The Honorable Jared Huffman  
House Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom McClintock  
House Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: H.R. 3237 Platte River Recovery Implementation Program Extension Act**

Dear Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member McClintock,

On behalf of the City of Aurora's Water Department (Aurora Water), I am writing to you in support of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Program) extension bill (H.R. 3237 and S. 990). This legislation will extend the successful partnership among the U.S. Department of Interior and the states of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming to provide benefits for threatened and endangered species in the Central and lower Platte River, while affording a means of predictable and streamlined Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance for new and existing water use activities in the three-state basin. Water users and conservation groups from the three states participate in this program.

Aurora Water is a municipal utility that provides drinking water, stormwater and sewer services to over 380,000 residents in the third largest city in Colorado. Aurora Water is a member in good standing with the South Platte Water Related Activities Program (SPWRAP), a Colorado nonprofit corporation, which serves as the collective voice for Colorado water users under the Program and assists the state of Colorado in fulfillment of various Program responsibilities. Through SPWRAP membership and the Program, Aurora Water has maintained ESA compliance for critical South Platte water supplies. The Program provides certainty for Aurora Water and many other water users to continue existing operations and pursue new water supplies for our growing populations and economies while balancing protection and maintenance of native species and habitat.

The waters of the Platte River serve the people of Colorado, Wyoming, 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 approximately 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.

The Program is a national model for collaborative solutions to multi-basin conflicts under the ESA. The first 13-year increment of the Program has witnessed significant improvement in the status of the federally listed birds and their habitat along the Central Platte, while close to 200 water use projects, approximately 70% of which were Colorado based, have been approved through streamlined ESA compliance consultations under the Program that have reduced the regulatory burden on water users. This is why we strongly support continuation of this Program.

H.R. 3237 proposes to extend the first increment of the Program for 13 more years, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in implementation of this extension, and to provide funding for the federal share of this extension. It will allow this good work to continue both for the benefit of the species and the economies of the areas dependent on the use and management of the Platte River. We request your support of reauthorization of the Program through passage of H.R. 3237.

Sincerely,



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Marshall P. Brown  
General Manager, Aurora Water

cc: The Honorable Jason Crow