

June 24, 2019

The Honorable Jared Huffman, Chair
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans & Wildlife
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom McClintock, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans & Wildlife
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

Re: Reauthorization of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (H.R. 3237)

Dear Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member McClintock:

I am writing to join many others in support of H.R. 3237, the reauthorization of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (program).

Denver Water proudly serves high-quality water and promotes its efficient use to 1.4 million people in the city of Denver and many surrounding suburbs. Established in 1918, the utility is a public agency funded by water rates and new tap fees, not taxes. It is Colorado's oldest and largest water utility.

This legislation will extend the successful partnership between 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 allowing for predictable and streamlined Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance for new and existing water use activities in the three-state basin. The program is critical to Denver Water; the South Platte River is one of our primary sources of raw water (providing approximately 50% of our supply). It is critical for Colorado as well. If the program is not successful, existing water uses can be severely impacted and the federal permitting of water supply projects in the South Platte, North Platte, and Platte River basins will become much more difficult.

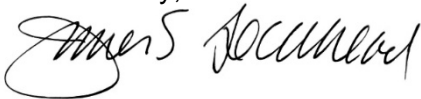
Denver Water is a member of the South Platte Water Related Activities Program (SPWRAP, a Colorado nonprofit corporation) which serves as the collective voice for Colorado water users under the program and assists the state of Colorado in fulfillment of various program initiatives. SPWRAP's membership includes approximately 70 municipal, 20 agricultural and 10 industrial water users as well as several water conservancy and water conservation districts.

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The program has offered critical streamlined ESA consultation for SPWRAP's members. The first 13-year increment of the program has resulted in significant success in conservation of endangered and threatened avian species and their habitat along the central Platte River. Close to 200 water use projects, approximately 70% of which are Colorado-based, have benefited from the streamlined ESA consultations that are made possible by the program. This has greatly reduced the regulatory burden on water users. Were the program extension not authorized, SPWRAP members would have to consult with agencies again on previously approved water use projects.

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 program to continue both for the benefit of the species and the economies of the areas dependent on the Platte River. Denver Water urges you to support the reauthorization of this program through H.R. 3237.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James S. Lochhead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" being particularly prominent.

James S. Lochhead
CEO/Manager
Denver Water

cc: Representatives Joe Neguse (Sponsor of H.R. 3237), Dianna DeGette, Ed Perlmutter,
Jason Crow