

South Platte Water Related Activities Program, Inc.
220 Water Avenue, Berthoud, Colorado, 80513



June 19, 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

Dear Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member McClintock,

On behalf of the South Platte Water Related Activities Program, Inc. (SPWRAP), I am writing in support of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Program) extension bill (H.R. 3237). 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 allowing for predictable and streamlined Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance for new and existing water use activities in the three-state basin.

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 opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Within Colorado, water in the South Platte River basin supports the state's fast-growing economy. SPWRAP, a Colorado nonprofit corporation, serves as the collective voice for Colorado water users under the Program and assists the state of Colorado in fulfillment of various Program responsibilities. SPWRAP's membership includes approximately 70 municipal, 20 agricultural, 10 industrial and several water conservancy and water conservation district members. SPWRAP members rely on streamlined ESA compliance provided by the Program. To date, SPWRAP has contributed more than \$13 million dollars towards the implementation of the Program.

The Program is a national model for collaborative solutions to species conservation, while allowing for existing and future water use. The first 13-year increment of the Program has

resulted in significant success in conservation of the endangered and threatened birds and their habitat along the Central Platte. Close to 200 water use projects, approximately 70% of which were Colorado-based, have been approved through streamlined ESA consultations, which have reduced the regulatory burden on water users. Were the Program extension not authorized, SPWRAP members would have to reconsult on previously approved water use projects. For these reasons, SPWRAP strongly supports 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 Program to continue both for the benefit of the species and the economies of the areas dependent on the Platte River. We urge you to support the reauthorization of this Program through H.R. 3237.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kim Hutton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Hutton
SPWRAP President