

MEMBER STATEMENT FOR THE 2020 WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT
REP. DIANA DEGETTE
FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Chairman Napolitano and Ranking Member Westerman,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written testimony to advocate for priorities in the upcoming Water Resources Development bill. Continuing the recent successes of passing WRDA bills in 2014, 2016 and 2018, this bill will help many states and localities move critical projects forward.

WRDA 2020 bill will not only provide the opportunity to authorize new, eligible projects. It will also continue the work of modernizing and streamlining the Corps' approval processes.

Chatfield Reservoir Storage Reallocation Project: I want to thank the committee for its support over the years of a critical water supply project in Colorado. A portion of the Chatfield Reservoir Storage Reallocation Project is in my district. Work on environmental mitigation and recreation modifications at the reservoir and state park are almost completed. The additional water storage that will soon become available at Chatfield is much needed in our semi-arid climate, helping the state of Colorado to mitigate the impacts of drought and climate change in the west.

PRIORITY PROJECT: DENVER PROJECT READY TO BE AUTHORIZED

- **Adams and Denver Counties, Colorado:** The Adams-Denver Counties, Colorado project is a generational opportunity for the Denver community to achieve ecosystem restoration and flood damage reduction benefits in the South Platte River and two gulches. The project was listed by R. D. James, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, in his testimony to the subcommittee on January 9, 2020. The Adams-Denver project also has a signed Chief of Engineer's Report, and the Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in October 2019. The project was also submitted for listing in the 2020 Annual Report to Congress, which is due out this month. I request the committee include this project for authorization in WRDA 2020.
- **Adams and Denver Counties, Colorado Pre-Construction Engineering and Design:** The next steps in the Adams-Denver project is the Pre-Construction Engineering and Design (PED) which must be undertaken and completed on the South Platte River portion of the project before a New Start designation can be sought. I ask the committee to consider language in the bill that will authorize specific funding for PED for projects that have received their Chief of Engineer's Report and ROD approval.

OTHER ISSUES in CO-01

The following are additional requests for my congressional district (CO – 1) for consideration in the 2020 Water Resources Development Act legislation:

- **Sec. 1135 Southern Platte Valley Ecosystem Restoration Project:** There is another Corps project in my district, the Southern Platte Valley Ecosystem Restoration Project under the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP). Competition for funds in CAP is fierce

and growing. As it has become harder to move larger projects forward from study to construction, local governments are looking more and more to CAP to help them zero in on urgent problems and get them addressed more quickly. WRDA 2018 boosted the program limits for CAP in nearly all categories. However, that has not resulted in comparable amounts in appropriated funds. I ask the committee to add language that separates CAP funding in the Corps budget as a separate line instead of having the CAP program categories compete for dollars for both studies and construction within the Corps overall construction budget.

- **Chatfield Downstream Improvement Channel:** Also, in my district is the Chatfield Downstream Improvement Channel. The Denver Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD) hopes to work with the Corps of Engineers to obtain a categorical Sec. 408 permit for work on the remaining 5.5 miles of the river in the Chatfield Downstream Improvement Channel along the South Platte River south of Denver. As you know, Section 408 allows USACE to grant permission to alter a Civil Works project upon determination that the alteration proposed will not be injurious to the public interest and will not impair the usefulness of the Civil Works project. One major improvement from previous WRDA bills is the creation of language that can, in some cases, allow categorical Sec. 408 permits to be issued. I hope to be able to work with the committee staff, the Corps, and local sponsors to determine what additional language could be included in WRDA 2020 to make consideration of such categorical permits possible.

COLORADO WIDE PRIORITIES

Correct Typo in Section 1170 - America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018

The following issue is in Section 1170 of S. 3021 and is related to watercraft inspection stations.

- In Paragraph (1), clause (iii) the language reads, “(iii) to protect the Upper Colorado River Basin and the South Platte and ~~Arizona~~ Arkansas River Basins.”
- There is no Arizona River Basin in Colorado and this should be corrected to Arkansas River Basins, as was the original intent of the 2018 legislation.
- I ask that the committee correct this typo in the 2020 WRDA, which will allow for critical federal funding and watercraft inspection stations in the Arkansas River Basin to protect Colorado against invasive species.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these requests in the upcoming 2020 Water Resources Development Act. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to my staffer, Matthew Allen at matthew.allen@mail.house.gov or 202.225.4431.

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress