



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

HILARY COOPER KRIS HOLSTROM LANCE WARING

August 20, 2020

Senator Michael Bennet  
261 Russell Senate Building  
Denver, CO 20510  
Attn: John\_Whitney@bennet.senate.gov

Dear Senator Bennet,

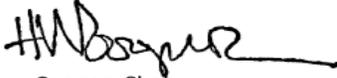
We are writing to you concerning the long-standing collaborative effort to protect the Dolores River. After more than a decade of broad stakeholder collaboration reflecting the wide variety of interests around the Dolores River, we would like to offer a National Conservation Area proposal that reflects input from and provides benefits to all involved. These include water users, agricultural interests, local governments, OHV users, conservation groups and recreationists.

We join our neighbors and colleagues in Dolores County in our shared support for these recommendations which reflect an agreement made for the portion of the Dolores River and surrounding lands in Dolores and San Miguel Counties. We respectfully request that you craft and introduce legislation reflecting these recommendations and stand ready to work with your office to see such legislation enacted into law.

The main purpose of the proposal is to ensure protection of all identified Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) while respecting and protecting private property rights, water rights and the Dolores Project/McPhee Reservoir and its allocations. The proposed NCA also protects historic uses and develops an alternative to a potential federally designated Wild and Scenic River. To be clear San Miguel County supports and agrees with the existing Wild and Scenic suitability determination. However, after actively participating in the locally driven stakeholder collaboration since its inception along with our Dolores County partners, we are confident that this NCA proposal protects the conservation, recreation and scientific resources of the Dolores River Corridor and maintains water rights and other uses important to the regional community. Key provisions include a mineral withdrawal, prohibition on new road construction, emphasis on native fish protection and protection for the areas included in the NCA, while also preserving water rights, agricultural opportunities and the MCPhee Reservoir operations and contracts.

Thank you for being a true champion for public lands in Colorado. We appreciate your efforts on the Dolores River collaborations to date and look forward to working diligently with you and your staff as we move this important legislation forward.

San Miguel County  
Board of Commissioners



Hilary Cooper, Chair



Lance Waring, Vice Chair



Kris Holstrom, Commissioner

CC: Dolores County Board of Commissioners, [dcdolocnty@fone.net](mailto:dcdolocnty@fone.net)