



County Commissioners:

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June 7, 2022

Honorable Michael Bennet
U.S. Senator
c/o 835 E. 2nd Ave. #206
Durango, CO 81301

RE: Lower Dolores River National Conservation Area

Dear Senator Bennet,

We are writing to show support for the proposal for a National Conservation Area (NCA) along the lower Dolores River. The proposal is the result of a long-standing collaborative effort to protect the Dolores River and the interests of the various stakeholders that it serves, including water users, agricultural entities, local governments, OHV users, conservation groups, and recreationalists.

In crafting the NCA proposal, Montezuma County, San Miguel County, Dolores County, and other partners sought to address a myriad of concerns, including those arising from the finding that the Dolores River is "suitable" for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It is the position of Montezuma County that designating the Dolores River as Wild and Scenic would result in significant consequences for water users and other groups seeking to access natural resources along the river corridor.

By supporting the proposal for an NCA, it is Montezuma County's intent to ensure that portions of the lower Dolores River that run through Montezuma, Dolores, and San Miguel counties will not be designated as Wild and Scenic, and it is our position that the NCA proposal sets forth an acceptable compromise between the various stakeholders interested in utilizing water and land resources in and along the Dolores River.

We appreciate the time and effort that working groups have spent developing the current NCA proposal. Montezuma County joins with Dolores County and San Miguel County in asking that you introduce legislation reflecting the recommendations contained in the NCA proposal and we stand ready to work with your office to see such legislation enacted into law.

Sincerely,


Jim Candelaria


Kent Lindsay


Gerald Koppenhafer