

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

January 23, 2023

The Honorable Camille Touton
Commissioner
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Commissioner Touton,

We write to encourage you to consider allocating additional funding, from either the recent omnibus for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), for the Arkansas Valley Conduit (the Conduit). As you know, the Conduit has been one of Colorado's top priorities for nearly six decades. Continuing to invest in this project will allow the project's stakeholders to plan for more effective construction and delivery of clean drinking water throughout Southeast Colorado.

The recent omnibus bill for FY23 exceeded the President's Budget request, including funding for ongoing work for Water Conservation and Delivery Projects. Although some of the additional funding was appropriated for specific purposes, we ask that the agency allocate additional funding for the Conduit from remaining funds.

We are pleased that the \$60 million already allocated to the project from BIL will result in the start of construction early this year as well as other activities. Stakeholders have indicated that additional funds could be immediately applied to the following:

- A contract to complete construction of the first reach of the trunk line to Boone, CO;
- Paying the remaining balance of the Construction Recovery Fee owed to the Pueblo Board of Water Works (which would avoid escalation charges);
- Construction of the dechloramination injection site as part of the Boone reach.

We commend the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) staff at the regional and area levels, as well as in your office, for their partnership with the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District to move this critical safe drinking water project forward. We understand that discussion of accelerating project construction is taking place based on the availability of BIL funds in addition to annual appropriations. Please also note that the State of Colorado proposes to direct an additional \$20 million in grants to further assist the local water providers in building the connections to the trunk line.

For years, this project languished due to insufficient funding and a prohibitive cost-share agreement. Congressional appropriations over the past decade coupled with BOR's recent \$60 million award will finally enable the construction of this long-

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promised project. More investment, from the FY23 omnibus or future BIL awards, would accelerate the construction timeline and improve planning efficiency.

We appreciate your attention and look forward to continuing to work with you on this important project.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
U.S. Senator



John Hickenlooper
U.S. Senator