



Senator Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet,

As a group of Colorado-based businesses and organizations, we would like to express our enthusiastic support for the *Dolores River National Conservation Area and Special Management Area Act* that you and Senator Hickenlooper introduced in the US Senate last month. As a business alliance and representatives of the outdoor recreation community working to advance land and water conservation, we know first-hand the importance of preserving intact landscapes and working towards designations that provide better management for our nation's special public lands.

The Dolores River is a vast and diverse region. With elevations ranging from over 8,000 feet down to 4,000 feet, there is important habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. These undeveloped and remote lands need to be preserved to help combat climate change and preserve plant and animal species.

These lands also support excellent recreational opportunities including world-class whitewater rafting, kayaking, and canoeing when flows allow. There are also numerous remote backcountry hiking and backpacking opportunities, as well as destinations for climbing and mountain biking. The Dolores River will undoubtedly become more popular in the years ahead, and additional resources will help manage this increased demand.

Not only will a National Conservation Area designation help to protect the landscape, but the creation of a diverse advisory committee will be invaluable in ensuring local voices are heard as management plans are developed for the area. Formalizing the Native Fish Monitoring and Recommendation Team will also help ensure their collaborative research on the river below McPhee Reservoir will inform the decisions of water managers during years where the reservoir fills. The legislation's assurance that the area will be protected from water development that would impact the area's values, including recreation, is significant and important.

The Dolores River is an incredibly deserving area for this legislative proposal, and we are happy to express the support of our businesses and organizations. And we are not alone. A recent poll by the Center for Western Priorities found a staggering 82% of respondents supported protecting the Dolores River. The local and bi-partisan involvement in the development of this legislation has undoubtedly contributed to the broad support the proposal now enjoys. We thank you for introducing the *Dolores River National Conservation Area and Special Management Area Act*, and we urge you to continue making protection of this amazing area of Colorado canyon country a priority.

Respectfully,

Shoren Brown
Interim Executive Director, The Conservation Alliance
Bend, OR

Louis Geltman
Policy Director, Outdoor Alliance
Washington, DC

Richard W. Harper, Jr.
Director of Government Affairs, Outdoor Industry
Association (OIA)
Boulder, CO

Julie Evans
CEO, Verde Brand Communications
Durango, CO

Bill Gamber
President & Co-Founder, Big Agnes Inc.
Steamboat Springs, CO

Brian Holcombe
General Manager, rygr
Carbondale/Denver, CO

Tim Koehler
CFO, Backpacker's Pantry
Boulder, CO

Ryan Mayo
Owner, Last Exit Goods
Steamboat Springs, CO

Penn Newhard
President, Backbone Media
Carbondale/Denver, CO

Eric Raymond
Director of Advocacy, The North Face
Denver, CO

Keith Reis
President, Sanitas Sales Group
Denver, CO