



La Plata County
Colorado

Board of County Commissioners,
Matt Salka, Chair
Marsha Porter-Norton, Vice Chair
Clyde Church, Commissioner

ACCOUNTABILITY · INTEGRITY · RESPECT

1101 East 2nd Ave
Durango, CO 81301
(970)382-6219

August 23, 2022

Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Lower Dolores River National Conservation Area

Dear Senator Bennet:

The La Plata County Board of County Commissioners enthusiastically supports the proposal for a National Conservation Area (NCA) for over 68,000 acres of public lands along the lower Dolores River. The proposal is the result of a nearly two-decades-long collaborative effort to protect the Dolores River and the interests of the various stakeholders that it serves, including: water users, agricultural entities, local governments, Tribal governments, OHV users, conservation groups and recreationalists.

The main purpose of the Dolores NCA continues to be 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 updated proposed NCA also protects historic uses and develops a locally-crafted alternative to a potential federally designated Wild & Scenic River.

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 prohibition on new road construction, emphasis on native fish protection and protection of the Dolores River corridor included in the NCA, while also preserving water rights and continued operations in support of those water rights, private property rights, agricultural opportunities and the McPhee Reservoir operations and contracts.

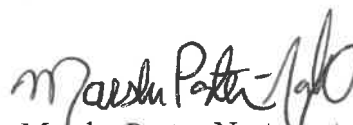
We appreciate your support of the Dolores River collaborations to date, including the active participation of your outstanding staff.

Thank you for introducing this legislation and being a true champion for public lands in Colorado.

Sincerely,

LA PLATA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Matt Salka
Chair


Marsha Porter-Norton
Vice Chair


Clyde Church
Commissioner