



**THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Developing and Conserving the Waters in the  
SAN JUAN AND DOLORES RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES  
**West Building – 841 East Second Avenue**  
**DURANGO, COLORADO 81301**  
**(970) 247-1302**

November 29, 2022

Honorable Michael Bennet  
U.S. Senator  
261 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Dolores River National Conservation Area and Special Management Area

Senator Bennet:

The Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) was created on April 16, 1941 by the Colorado General Assembly. SWCD is comprised of all or part of nine counties in southwestern Colorado: Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma, Montrose, San Juan, and San Miguel. SWCD's statutory authority is to protect, conserve, use and develop the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins for the welfare of the SWCD, and safeguard for Colorado all waters to which the state is entitled. Following this mandate, SWCD has assumed a broad strategic role on behalf of its diverse constituents for more than 80 years.

The SWCD Board of Directors has voted to support the Dolores River National Conservation Area legislation. The proposal is the result of a long-standing collaborative effort to protect the Dolores River and the multiple interests of the various stakeholders that it serves. The resulting legislation enshrines a compromise that removes the segment of the Lower Dolores from any further consideration as a Wild and Scenic River while still providing protections for the natural, recreational, agricultural and other current uses of the Dolores River Canyon as a National Conservation Area/Special Management Area.

We appreciate the time and effort that working groups have spent developing the current proposal. We are also grateful for your ongoing efforts to support the management of water resources in southwestern Colorado.

Respectfully,

Steve Wolff  
General Manager