



**COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT**  
PROTECTING WESTERN COLORADO WATER SINCE 1937

August 28, 2023

**VIA EMAIL ONLY**

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-221 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-230 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker  
House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
House of Representatives  
2433 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for the Tribal Access to Clean Water Act of 2023

Dear Senator Schumer, Senator McConnell, Representative McCarthy, and Representative Jeffries:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Tribal Access to Clean Water Act, S. 2385 and H.R. 4746, which will provide badly needed technical assistance, capacity, and resources to address the inequity in access to clean water for Tribes.

The Colorado River District is a public regional water planning and policy agency. As a legal subdivision of the State of Colorado, we strive “to lead in the protection, conservation, use, and development of the water resources of the Colorado River Basin for the welfare of the district, and to safeguard for Colorado all waters of the Colorado River to which the state is entitled.” While we have no tribal reservation lands within the boundaries of our District, we strongly support the utilization of tribal reserved water rights, especially for clean drinking water.

Access to clean water is a basic human right. Clean water is foundational for human health, growing economies, and a minimum level of support for communities. However, 48 percent of households on Native American reservations do not have clean water or adequate sanitation. Native American homes are 19 times more likely than white households to lack indoor plumbing.

Thanks to your sponsorship of S. 2385 and H.R. 4746 in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, funding for safe drinking water systems for Tribal communities received a significant boost from the Infrastructure



Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. While groundbreaking and long overdue, the funding now available for construction and repair of domestic water systems in Indian country is not a complete solution. Technical assistance is needed to allow Tribes to plan and design the systems necessary to access clean drinking water and bring those plans to the “shovel ready” stage where they can take advantage of the newly available construction funding. In addition, Tribes need support to develop the managerial, financial, and regulatory capacity required for a fully functional and self-sustaining utility. Finally, because Tribes cannot rely on the same types and volumes of revenue streams to support operation and maintenance (O&M) of water systems, O&M assistance helps to ensure that the benefits of the historic investment in infrastructure are fully realized.

The Tribal Access to Clean Water Act of 2023 would address these gaps and advance the Federal Government’s treaty and trust obligations to provide clean and accessible water for Native communities. We strongly support swift passage of The Tribal Access to Clean Water Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. A. Mueller", is positioned above the printed name.

Andrew A. Mueller  
General Manager

CC: Sen. Bennet (C-CO)  
Sen. Hickenlooper (D-CO)  
Rep. Neguse (D-CO-3)  
Rep. DeGette (D-CO-1)  
Heather Tanana