

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 4, 2025

Scott Cameron  
Acting Assistant Secretary for  
Water and Science  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

David Palumbo  
Acting Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Cameron and Acting Commissioner Palumbo:

We write to urge you to release funding for fifteen Colorado projects that were selected for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Upper Colorado River Basin Environmental Drought Mitigation funding opportunity, part of a category of funding commonly known as "Bucket 2." We appreciate that you recently released funding for two such projects in western Colorado which will ensure reliable water delivery while improving water quality and endangered fish habitat. Now, we ask you to move forward with obligating the remaining \$140 million worth of Bucket 2 projects in Colorado – not just for the benefit of our state, but for the resilience of the entire Colorado River Basin.

In 2022, Congress provided \$4 billion to address the impacts of drought with a priority for the Colorado River Basin, including activities to support environmental benefits and promote ecosystem and habitat restoration. This directive recognizes the interconnected nature of a water system like Colorado's, which relies on healthy waterways as our most important conveyance facilities. The majority of Colorado's awards from the \$4 billion provided by Congress thus far have been for these Bucket 2 projects, which were developed by our state's water users – Tribes, irrigation districts, agricultural producers, towns, and conservation groups – who understand the improvements they need to build drought resilience.


By making the Colorado River Basin's headwaters more resilient, these Bucket 2 projects will also help manage the impacts of the unrelenting 25-year drought affecting the Colorado River Basin. As Colorado and the other Basin States work towards an agreement for future operations on the river, it is critical to invest in the health of our headwaters so we can all better withstand the impacts of drought. We must make these investments in long-term drought management now as Congress intended, and not delay until only short-term solutions are available.

Each of Colorado's Bucket 2 projects deliver water supply security in ways that make sense for our state. Every project was the result of thoughtful collaboration amongst regional partners and

every project provides multiple benefits. For example, one project will improve water supply reliability to 23,000 acres of tribal and non-tribal agricultural lands by repairing deteriorated infrastructure and simultaneously improving fish habitat. Another will deploy drought mitigation strategies across an entire region of the state, benefiting a wide variety of water users. Yet another will secure permanency of river flows with large-scale, systematic benefits to the Colorado River and has garnered support from rural communities across western Colorado.


Our water infrastructure in Colorado is not just a network of manmade dams, canals, and pipelines – crucially, it is also the streams and rivers that convey water, the headwater meadows and wetlands that regulate water timing, the healthy forests that store snowpack, the riparian areas that prevent erosion, and the reliable flows that we all count on. With the headwaters of the Colorado River originating in our state, resilience in Colorado means resilience for the whole basin. We stand ready to work with you on building the West’s drought resilience, and ask that you help us do so by fully funding Colorado’s Bucket 2 projects.

Sincerely,



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John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator




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Jeff Hurd  
Member of Congress




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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator




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Jeff Crank  
Member of Congress



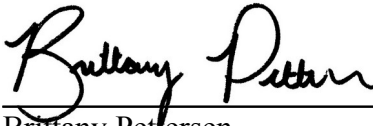
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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



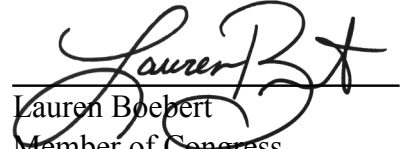
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Gabe Evans  
Member of Congress



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Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



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Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress