



S O U T H E A S T E R N C O L O R A D O

Water Conservancy District

"Your investment in water"

August 18, 2022

Ms. Camille Touton
Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street NW Washington DC 20240-0001

RE: Actions to address Colorado River drought

Over the past two decades, the Colorado River basin has experienced the worst drought in the last 1,200 years, which has reduced storage levels in Lakes Powell and Mead to unprecedented and critical levels. The Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District (SECWCD), the repayment entity for the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project (Fry-Ark Project), supports the efforts of the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC), the State of Colorado, and municipal and agricultural water providers in the basin, to collaborate in bringing the system into balance.

As you know, SECWCD, through the Fry-Ark Project, provides a supplemental water supply to municipal and irrigation water users in the Arkansas River Basin in Colorado. SECWCD supports the 5-point plan outlined by the UCRC in its July 18, 2022, letter to you. Specifically, one of the points of the UCRC 5-point plan addresses water conservation. SECWCD supports the commitments of municipal water providers within the SECWCD and Fry-Ark Project boundaries to increase water conservation, such as the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Board of Water Works of Pueblo, Colorado (BWWP), and the City of Colorado Springs, acting by and through its utility enterprise (CS-U), along with other Colorado and other western state municipal water providers.

SECWCD allocates Fry-Ark Project water to municipal and domestic water providers such as BWWP and CS-U, as well as other communities along the Arkansas River in Colorado. SECWCD is actively pursuing construction of the final piece of the Fry-Ark Project, the Arkansas Valley Conduit, which will supply clean, safe drinking water to approximately 39 municipal and domestic water suppliers in the Lower Arkansas Valley, fulfilling a promise made to the valley's residents just over 60 years ago. As part of the SECWCD's contract with the United States, SECWCD assures that all the municipal water providers in the District have a conservation plan.

In addition to allocating supplemental water to municipal and domestic water providers, SECWCD allocates Fry-Ark Project water to irrigation ditches in the Arkansas Basin. Because of the limited amount of supplemental water available to irrigation ditches, as well as the supply-limited nature of the primary irrigation water sources, Arkansas Basin farmers are extremely efficient in using this limited resource.

The challenges in the Colorado River Basin affect us all and require collaboration across the entire Basin. Data from the Bureau of Reclamation shows that Lower Basin and Mexico depletions are more than double the depletions in the Upper Basin. Therefore, additional efforts to protect critical reservoir elevations must include significant actions focused downstream of Lake Powell. Otherwise, the effectiveness of the UCRC 5-Point Plan, especially water conservation in the Upper Basin, will be limited.

SECWCD looks forward to working with you on this critical effort while also developing sustainable long-term solutions to address the challenges in the Colorado River Basin.

Sincerely,



James W. Broderick
Executive Director

cc: Jim Lochhead, Denver Water
Seth Clayton, Pueblo Water
Lisa Barbato, Colorado Springs Utilities
Rebecca Mitchell, CWCB
Marshall Brown, Aurora Water
Brad Wind, Northern Water
Lee Miller, SECWCD
SECWCD Board Members