

July 20, 2022

Representative Lauren Boebert
1609 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Boebert:

We are writing you in regard to legislation designating a portion of the Dolores River Canyon as a National Conservation Area (NCA) and adjacent Special Management Area (SMA). The designation would include lands within Dolores, Montezuma, and San Miguel Counties and lands ancestral to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. We're aware of your interest in possibly sponsoring companion legislation in the House.

As you know, our counties and the Tribe have participated in discussions about how best to manage the Dolores River Canyon for well over a decade. Working in a collaborative coalition of water users, agriculture interests, motorized recreationists, conservation groups, and the Tribe and affected counties, we held years of discussions based on respect for each other's values, science-based solutions, honoring of existing water rights and McPhee project contract obligations, and constructive compromise. The result was a set of legislative recommendations that removed the Dolores River within the NCA/SMA from future consideration for Wild and Scenic suitability by land managers, protected water rights, protected agriculture interests including livestock grazing, and protected Ute Mountain Ute water settlements, while also protecting the natural and scenic values of the canyon. At the request of all three counties and the Tribe, Senator Bennet and Senator Hickenlooper honored those agreements in their recently introduced Dolores River National Conservation Area and Special Management Area Act, S. 4542. We are encouraged by your interest in this legislation, and welcome your potential sponsorship in the House of Representatives.

The compromise we achieved after roughly 14 years of discussions and negotiation represents a delicate balance of all parties' interests. Each part of the agreement/legislation depends on the others to maintain the strength of the whole, and in keeping the broad array of stakeholder interests at the table and working as a group to move the legislation forward. This carefully crafted balance must be maintained to preserve the power that a diverse set of interests brings to the political process. We encourage your introduction of a House companion bill for the Dolores NCA/SMA, and request that your legislation exactly mirror S. 4542. Not only will an exact companion honor the hard-won compromises that keep us as enthusiastic advocates, it will also give the legislation the best chance for enactment by Congress in these divided times.

We look forward to working with you to move this legislation through the House and Senate as soon as possible, and help this rare, diversely-crafted compromise become law. With such strong local bipartisan support we see a path forward in Congress. We thank you again for your interest, and look forward to further discussion.

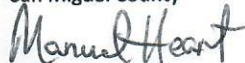
Sincerely,



Floyd L. Cook, Chair
Dolores County



Kris Holstrom, Chair
San Miguel County



Manuel Heart, Chair
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe