LAUREN BOEBERT 3nd District, Colonado NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUDGET COMMITTEE



## Congress of the United States Bouse of Representatives

October 27, 2022

Washington, DC 20515-0603

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BOEBERT.HOUSE.GOV

Clint Evans, State Conservationist Natural Resources Conservation Service Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 56, Room 2400 Denver, CO 80225-0426

RE: USDA/NRCS Watershed Program Planning Assistance

Dear Mr. Evans:

I write in strong support of a local effort in Huerfano County to help preserve Colorado's water through increased storage capacity connected to the Upper Cucharas River. Over the past seven years, multiple local agencies and organizations have worked together with the Huerfano County Water Conservancy District to help develop the Cucharas Basin Storage Collaborative, which is a potential Public Law 566 project.

The goal of the collaborative is to increase water storage for the benefit of the underserved population in and near La Veta, which struggles annually with low levels of precipitation. The Cucharas Basin Storage Collaborative effort would enlarge the Maria-Stevens Reservoir, connect three smaller existing reservoirs, and add a proposed Bruce Canyon Reservoir for a total addition of 1,900 acre-feet of water storage. This water saving system would benefit local agriculture, provide for municipal, industrial and augmentation uses, and provide added benefits of fishing and flat-water boating.

The collaborative has achieved a Water Court Decree for the planned storage facilities and water exchanges, plus it has intergovernmental agreements in place for the project's implementation. Engineering work to determine feasibility and produce initial project design and cost estimates is also completed; and the next steps are planning and capital funding.

As Representative for Colorado's largest district, I place a high priority on preserving Colorado's water for the benefit of Colorado's citizens. I commend Huerfano County's citizens for their hard work and foresight in preparing the Cucharas Basin Storage Collaborative to this point, and I strongly encourage NRCS to give full consideration to this watershed program planning project in Hydrologic Unit Code #1102000604 – Upper Cucharas River.

Sincerely,

Lauren Boebert U.S. Congresswoman (CO-03)