



July 12, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso, MD  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: ESA Amendments of 2018 – Discussion draft**

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

The Colorado River Water Conservation District (Colorado River District) commends and applauds your “ESA Amendments of 2018” discussion draft. Your leadership and initiative to improve the Endangered Species Act (ESA) through this discussion draft is appreciated by all of us who have been frustrated by the failures and inflexibility of the current ESA.

The Colorado River District has long recognized the importance of the ESA and the need for improvements (as well as reauthorization) to the Act that genuinely benefit listed species as well as affected parties and communities. Your draft is a large and important step in the process to improve and reauthorize the ESA. While there are areas of ESA reform we would dearly love to see included in your draft, we commend your focus and restraint to addressing only common-sense, workable improvements that should enjoy bi-partisan consensus.

We recognize the close adherence to the reform principles developed by the Western Governors Association through its bipartisan, multi-year effort that we had the pleasure of contributing to. Specifically, we commend your inclusion of the states in the listing and recovery process.

The Colorado River District was a founding member of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fishes Recovery Program, which has proven the power and potential of collaboration and partnership among federal, state, and affected interests. Species recovery progress continues while water and power users in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah are relatively unaffected by the more onerous implications of the ESA.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue. The Colorado River District looks forward to working with you to advance this important public policy issue.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Treese, Manager  
External Affairs

cc: The Honorable Cory Gardner  
The Honorable Michael Bennet

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