



The Honorable Jeff Flake, Chairman
The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto, Ranking Member
Water and Power Subcommittee
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Subject: S. 2166 “Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017”

Dear Chairman Flake and Ranking Member Cortez Masto:

On behalf of the Colorado Water Congress, we are writing to express our support for S. 2166, “Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017.” The Colorado Water Congress is the principal voice of Colorado’s water community.

The Colorado Water Congress supports the intent of the legislation to provide for continued use of Colorado River Storage Project for annual funding of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program through 2023 at the current authorized levels. Substantial cost sharing and in-kind contributions are also provided by the States of Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Utah, water users, tribes, environmental organizations, and CRSP power customers.

These programs intend to recover four fish species listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) while water development proceeds in accordance with state water and wildlife law, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation water project authorizations, and interstate compacts approved by Congress.

The recovery programs take actions to recover the endangered fish species. Those actions provide ESA compliance for approximately 2,500 water projects in Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico in the Upper Colorado River basin upstream of Lake Powell. There have been no lawsuits on ESA compliance provided by the recovery programs. The programs have streamlined administration of the ESA for federal agencies, tribes, and water users.

Colorado River Storage Project revenues provide critical annual funding for the programs for operation and maintenance of facilities to recover the species, including fish screens, fish passages, bottomland habitat, and hatcheries, research and monitoring, and program management.

We appreciate the Subcommittee’s past support for the programs and request your support for S. 2166.

Sincerely,

Doug Kemper
Executive Director