



July 22, 2020

The Honorable Michael Bennet
 U.S. Senate
 261 Russell Senate Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
 U.S. Senate
 354 Russell Senate Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Diana DeGette
 U.S. House of Representatives
 2111 Rayburn House Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
 U.S. House of Representatives
 1419 Longworth House Building
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Scott Tipton
U.S. House of Representatives
218 Cannon House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Buck
U.S. House of Representatives
2455 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doug Lamborn
U.S. House of Representatives
2371 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jason Crow
U.S. House of Representatives
1229 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter
U.S. House of Representatives
1226 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Include Urgently Needed Funding for Water Infrastructure and Water Affordability Needs in Next Congressional Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation:

Our organizations collectively represent Colorado communities and municipalities, including over thirty-five Colorado water agencies and other water and environmental stakeholders. In this time of crisis, we have come together to urge the Colorado Congressional Delegation to include funding for urgent water infrastructure and water affordability needs as part of the next federal stimulus package or other pending Congressional actions.

We urge you to take the following steps as part of the next federal stimulus package or other pending water or infrastructure-related Congressional actions:

1. We support the call for a national increase of \$100 billion in new funding over five years for Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, with at least 20 percent of this new funding distributed to disadvantaged communities as grants rather than loans. Eligibility for the new funding should apply to all water utilities and resource agencies, regardless of their organizational structure. \$2.2 billion in funding should be directed to Colorado's Drinking Water and Water Pollution Control Revolving Funds to support urgent water priorities in our state. These funds would provide vital direct support for sustainable and affordable water infrastructure, including decentralized water management strategies, which are proven to generate near-term jobs and local economic stimulus.
2. \$4 billion in immediate funding to the Environmental Protection Agency for grants to the states for a Low-Income Households Drinking Water and Wastewater Assistance/Affordability Program to help struggling households pay for essential water and wastewater service.

3. Emergency funding for affected water utilities, particularly those serving disadvantaged or hard-hit communities, to help offset lost revenue, the costs associated with moratoriums on shutoffs, and the essential public health protections being put in place by water utilities.
4. Assurance that any water utility receiving funding has in place a shutoff moratorium and safe reconnection policy that ensures access to water in homes now and through the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, and that allows for relief to vulnerable customers for a time afterwards to regain their financial footing while also providing needed fiscal support to water systems.

While not a comprehensive list of the actions our various organizations believe should be taken, these do represent meaningful, and we believe necessary, steps to meet both immediate and long-term drinking water needs of Coloradans while also boosting the economy and helping preserve access to one of the most fundamental tools in our arsenal to address the spread of COVID-19 – washing your hands.

We urge the Colorado delegation to champion this issue in the coming weeks. We also encourage you to join your colleagues from the House Environmental Justice Taskforce and the Senate Environmental Justice Caucus as they push for stimulus provisions to support what Coloradans and the nation need to ensure both immediate and long-term responses to this crisis and beyond.

We welcome the opportunity to brief you further on this urgent issue. For questions or to discuss further, please do not hesitate to reach out to Cynthia Koehler at WaterNow (ck@waternow.org) or Corinne Bell at NRDC (cbell@nrdc.org).

Sincerely,

Bonnie DeHart, Chair, All Families Deserve a Chance Coalition (representing 15+ groups)

Chris Brandewie P.E., Rural Development Specialist, Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Corinne Bell, Program Attorney, Water Initiatives, Natural Resources Defense Council

Cynthia Koehler, Executive Director, WaterNow Alliance

David Nickum, Executive Director, Colorado Trout Unlimited

Devon Buckels, AICP, Director, The Water Connection

Ean Thomas Tafoya, Colorado Field Organizer, Colorado Latino Forum & GreenLatinos

Emily Gedeon, Acting Chapter Director, Colorado Sierra Club

Jennifer Gremmert, Executive Director, Energy Outreach Colorado

Jennifer Peters, National Water Programs Director, Clean Water Action

Jim Lochhead, CEO, Denver Water

Josh Kuhn, Water Advocate, Conservation Colorado

Liz Rosenbaum, Co-Founder, Fountain Valley Clean Water Coalition

Marshall Brown, General Manager, Aurora Water

Mayor Jan Kulmann, City of Thornton

Mayor Wade Troxell, City of Fort Collins

Mayor Will Karspeck, Town of Berthoud

Rebecca Curry, Colorado Policy Advocate, EarthJustice

Roy H. Otto, City Manager, City of Greeley

Sabrina Pacha, Manager, Healthy Air and Water Colorado

Sam Weaver, Mayor, City of Boulder

Steve Simon, Deputy Director of Engineering, City of Englewood

Tehri Parker, Executive Director, Rocky Mountain Wild

Todd Reeve, Director, Business for Water Stewardship

Torie Jarvis, Director, Northwest Colorado Water Quality/Quantity Committee