



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

June 6, 2012

John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor

Mike King  
Executive Director

Dick Wolfe, P.E.  
Director

Craig Cotten, P.E.  
Division Engineer

Mr. Mike Gibson, Chairman  
Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable  
415 San Juan Avenue  
Alamosa, CO 81101

Re: Sanchez Ditch and Reservoir Company Request for Funding

Dear Mike,

This letter is in support of the funding request of the Sanchez Ditch and Reservoir Company to the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable and ultimately the Colorado Water Conservation Board for the Sanchez Reservoir upgrade and gate replacement project.

As you are aware, the Sanchez Ditch and Reservoir Company is requesting funding to demolish the existing gate tower, install new outlet gates and gate structures, and repair the outlet conduit. The gate tower and outlet conduit are in need of repair, as these concrete structures have deteriorated over the last 100 years since the dam was constructed. The demolition of the tower and the addition of a new operating system for the outlet gates will greatly increase the safety of those operating the reservoir.

Sanchez Reservoir is a valuable water structure for many irrigators on Culebra Creek in the southern San Luis Valley. The reservoir also acts as an important flood control reservoir at times when Culebra Creek is running higher than its capacity.

Due to the ongoing drought that we find ourselves in, Sanchez Reservoir currently contains only 8,800 acre-feet of water. This is significantly less than its decreed capacity of over 100,000 acre-feet. Because the reservoir will have to be drained in order for these repairs to be made, this is an excellent time for this rehabilitation to take place. Draining the reservoir now will cause much less of an impact upon Culebra Creek and those farmers that rely on reservoir releases for their water supply.

There are some additional dam safety related issues with Sanchez Reservoir that will not be addressed by this proposal, and the Division of Water Resources would encourage the Sanchez Ditch and Reservoir Company to consider incorporating those additional repairs and studies into a comprehensive rehabilitation package.

I recommend the Rio Grande Roundtable and the Colorado Water Conservation Board support funding for the Sanchez Reservoir rehabilitation. If you need further information regarding the impact of this proposal on Colorado's water administration please contact me at (719) 589-6683.

Sincerely,

Craig W. Cotten  
Division Engineer  
Colorado Division of Water Resources, Div. 3

Water Division 3 • Alamosa

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## United States Department of Agriculture



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June 1, 2012

Mike Gibson, Chairman  
Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable  
145 San Juan Avenue  
Alamosa, CO 81101

Reference: Application for CWCB Funding  
Sanchez Reservoir Upgrade and Gate Tower Replacement

Dear Mr. Gibson:

Please be advised that NRCS is very much in favor of the proposed upgrade of Sanchez Reservoir by Sanchez Ditch & Reservoir Company (SDRC), and we urge the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable to approve their request for funds from the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

NRCS recognizes the critical importance of supporting agricultural irrigators during drought years as well as providing for future water needs. Considering that the SDRC Infrastructure is 100 years old, this is one especially important need to address. Upgrades are necessary to maintain storage and to manage water supplies efficiently for future generations.

Sanchez is an important reservoir to the Culebra watershed because the reservoir is primary source of irrigation water to meet the needs of the Sanchez ditch company members. The Sanchez Ditch Company is an important part of the Basin and contributor to the agricultural economy of the San Luis Valley. As such, the Sanchez Reservoir is a valuable asset to Colorado, providing flood control, meeting agricultural needs, providing recreation, and serving as a State Wildlife Area.

This will be a major construction project, requiring the reservoir to be drained during a period of six months to perhaps 1.5 years, depending on conditions. NRCS believes that since we are already in a drought pattern, drawing down the reservoir to do the construction would mean less impact on irrigators because less water would be released or lost from the system in order to make the

repairs. (The water levels in the reservoir will be already low due to drought conditions.)

Replacing the Gate Tower and upgrading the outlet structure will greatly improve the water management capabilities of SDRC, improving safety and efficiency, reducing costs, and ensuring the continued long term structural integrity of Sanchez Dam. This project is extremely important to SDRC shareholders and to downstream irrigators in the Culebra watershed for generations to come.

We urge the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable to approve the funds requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Tracy Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "N." and last name "Miller" clearly distinguishable.

N. Tracy Miller

NRCS

District Conservationist

San Luis Field Office