



OFFICE OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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GREELEY, COLORADO 80632

February 10, 2015

Mr. Craig Godbout  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman Street, Suite 721  
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Mr. Godbout,

The Board of Weld County Commissioners expresses its support of the Open Water Foundation's WSRA grant request for the Agricultural Land/Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis.

Weld County is consistently ranked within the top ten agricultural producing counties in the nation and is Colorado's leading producer of beef cattle, grain, sugar beets, and dairy. Unfortunately, much of northern Colorado is experiencing and is predicted to experience significant losses of irrigated agriculture due to the buying/drying of water rights from municipal water providers as well as urbanization.

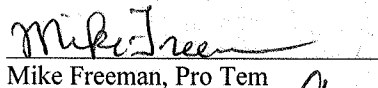
To provide an alternative to this dry up of irrigated lands, this project seeks to bring together the distinct interests of farmers and ranchers, local governments and municipal water providers to help leverage the financial resources necessary to protect irrigated farmland in northern Colorado using market-based approaches. The Commissioners believe this proposal is unique in that it not only seeks to develop an alternative water transfer method, but also protects agriculture in the fast-growing Front Range urban corridor providing important attributes such as open space, locally produced agriculture, and associated environmental benefits.

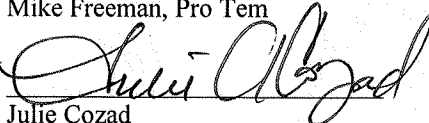
Thank you for your consideration of this project.

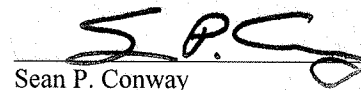
Very truly yours,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
Barbara Kirkmeyer, Chair

  
Mike Freeman, Pro Tem

  
Julie Cozad

  
Sean P. Conway

  
Steve Moreno

cc: Don Warden

February 18, 2015

Mr. Craig Godbout  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman Street, Suite 721  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Mr. Godbout:

Please accept this letter in support of the Open Water Foundation's request for funds from the Water Supply Reserve Account (WSRA) to assist in the implementation of the Agricultural Land/Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis. This project will bring together the distinct interests of farmers and ranchers, local governments, municipal water providers, and conservationists to help leverage the financial resources necessary to protect irrigated farmland in northern Colorado while providing a portion of water for municipal uses. As a South Platte Basin Roundtable member, I believe this type of project can help to alleviate the basin's water supply gap while helping to meet other important land use and conservation objectives.

This feasibility study seeks to examine conservation easements as a tool to help facilitate alternative water transfers while preserving agricultural lands. While it is expected that conservation easements can play an important role as a means by which such transfers can be facilitated, there are some important questions that must be answered prior to widespread adoption. The Nature Conservancy will be participating in an advisory capacity as member of the team engaged with this study. Conservancy staff look forward to study's findings and believe the findings will help inform any number of efforts unfolding around Colorado, including the efforts of the Colorado River Water Bank Working Group.

Thank you for your consideration of this endorsement of the proposed Agricultural Land/Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis. We hope CWCB will be able to support this important and timely effort to further our collective understanding of ways in which irrigated agriculture, urban areas, and the natural environment can benefit through the joint application of new tools such as ATMs and newly adapted existing tools like conservation easements.

Sincerely,

*Doug Robotham*

Doug Robotham  
Water Projects Director

February 18, 2015

Mr. Craig Godbout  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Water Supply Planning Section  
1313 Sherman Street, Suite 718  
Denver, CO 80203

Re: *Agricultural Land/Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis*, WSRA Grant Application

Dear Craig,

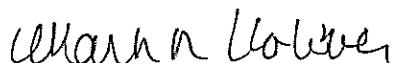
The Metro Roundtable has received a presentation regarding the WSRA application from the Open Water Foundation for funds to assist in the implementation of the Agricultural Land/Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis.

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the feasibility of an agricultural land and water buffer in northern Colorado where land and water resources are most threatened by traditional agricultural transfers and urbanization. The project will bring together diverse entities (e.g. farmers, local governments and municipal water providers) to identify means to leverage scarce financial resources to protect valuable agricultural lands and production, provide open space, and provide interruptible supplies for municipal and industrial water providers. With the forecasted water demands in the South Platte River basin, it is critical that all water supply options are explored, including innovative agricultural transfers such as those proposed in this application.

In the Draft South Platte Basin Implementation Plan, the Metro and the South Platte Basin Roundtables have identified support for alternative transfer methods such as those to be explored through the Agricultural Land/Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis.

Upon review and consideration of this grant application by the Metro Roundtable, a motion was made and seconded to recommend that the CWCB approve \$84,954 in funding from the WSRA Statewide account, and \$20,000 from the WSRA South Platte Basin account, for this application. A quorum of the Metro Roundtable unanimously approved that motion at its February 11, 2015 meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Koleber".

Mark Koleber, Chair  
Metro Roundtable



2926 E. Mulberry  
Fort Collins, CO 80524  
970-221-9863  
[gkernohan@ducks.org](mailto:gkernohan@ducks.org)

February 20, 2015

Mr. Brent Newman  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman Street, Suite 721  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Brent,

Ducks Unlimited is submitting this letter in strong support of the Open Water Foundation's Water Supply Reserve Account (WSRA) grant request for the Agricultural Land/Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis to assist in the implementation of the Agricultural Land/Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis. This project seeks to bring together the distinct interests of farmers and ranchers, local governments and municipal water providers to help leverage the financial resources necessary to protect irrigated farmland in northern Colorado while providing a portion of water for municipal uses. As a South Platte Basin Roundtable member, I believe this type of project can help to alleviate the basin's water supply gap while helping to meet multiple objectives.

This feasibility study seeks to examine conservation easements as a tool to help facilitate alternative water transfers while preserving agricultural lands. While it is expected that conservation easements can play an important role, there are some important questions that must be answered prior to widespread adoption. Ducks Unlimited will lend technical assistance as requested and looks forward to study's findings in hopes of developing innovative programs that assist with Colorado's water sharing needs.

Thank you for your consideration for this project.

Sincerely,

*Greg Kernohan*

Greg Kernohan  
Manager, Ecosystem Services, Great Plains Region