

November 15, 2018

Governor-Elect Jared Polis
Colorado State Capitol
Denver, Colorado

Dear Governor-Elect Polis:

Congratulations on your election, and the positive, solutions-oriented nature of your campaign. As members of the philanthropic community deeply invested in the future of Colorado, we look forward to working with you on many important issues. Water is one of those important issues that touches every person and community within our state. With Colorado's population expected to double by 2050, there is widespread recognition that our water resources will be critically important to our future. By some calculations, we could have a shortfall of water for over one million people by mid-century. Colorado's Water Plan articulates solutions to address that gap while maintaining healthy rivers and vibrant agricultural economies. However, the Plan fails to identify sustainable funding to make all of the investments the plan recommends.

Recognizing this reality, the Gates Family Foundation and Walton Family Foundation initiated a conversation to explore options. While Colorado's Water Plan identifies a new path forward, some of the most important priorities in the plan do not have sustainable dedicated funding at the level required for full implementation. Most traditional water projects will continue to be financed as they always have been (through water utility rates and other local funding options), but the plan identifies a \$100 million annual "funding gap" between 2020 and 2050.

We are interested in working with you and other partners to address the need for sustainable public funding and are willing to make significant commitments of time and resources to support these efforts. To that end, starting in January 2018, we convened an informal forum of state leaders representing a broad variety of perspectives – environment, recreation, agriculture, local government, major utilities, and business – to discuss a sustainable water funding proposal. That group met multiple times over a ten-month period for conversations moderated by the Keystone Policy Center. Those conversations resulted in the attached document.

We deliver this document to you to show the broad, diverse, and bipartisan statewide support for advancing a funding proposal to fill the funding gap, specifically to address:

- Healthy rivers
- Watershed health & water quality
- Conservation and efficiency
- Productive agriculture
- Infrastructure
- Colorado Compact obligations

While there is more work to be done, we feel this initial convening of stakeholders provides a strong foundation for future progress. We and the entire group involved in this effort welcome the opportunity to work with you and your administration to advance a solution that can generate broad support. We hope together we can create the conditions that will allow you to lead on this issue, and look forward to working with you and your team to advance the concepts in this document.

Sincerely,



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