

**BEFORE THE COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD**

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**IN THE MATTER OF PROPOSED INSTREAM FLOW ACQUISITION DIVISION 5:  
SHOSHONE**

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**NOTICE OF PARTY STATUS: BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE  
COUNTY OF GARFIELD**

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Pursuant to 2 CCR 408-2 6m.(5)(e) the Board of County Commissioners of Garfield County hereby submits its Notice of Party Status as follows:

1. Name and Address:

Garfield County Board of County Commissioners  
c/o Heather K. Beattie, Garfield County Attorney  
101 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 101  
Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81601

Email: [hbeattie@garfieldcountyco.gov](mailto:hbeattie@garfieldcountyco.gov)

With copy to: Christopher Geiger, P.O. Drawer 790, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601  
[chrisg@balcombgreen.com](mailto:chrisg@balcombgreen.com)

2. Basis for Party Status:

The Board of Commissioners of Garfield County, Colorado (Garfield County) is an active proponent for preservation of the Colorado River flow regime generated by the operation of the Shoshone Power Plant water rights. Garfield County has pledged \$3 million toward the acquisition of these water rights by the Colorado River Water Conservation District for donation to the Colorado Water Conservation Board and thus has a direct and immediate interest in the subject matter of this hearing.

Preservation of this historical flow regime is critical to the citizens of Garfield County, which relies upon the availability of Colorado River water supplies for much of its economic activity. The Shoshone flows are a bedrock for the success of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and ensure that Garfield County's \$35.9 million agricultural economy can exist alongside critical habitat protections under this Endangered Species Act Recovery Program.<sup>1</sup>

Further, Garfield County commercial river outfitters and recreationalists need these flows to keep our local economies afloat and recreation as a central economic driver. A study by Earth Economics estimates that recreation within Garfield County (from No Name to DeBeque) supports

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, *2017 Census of Agriculture, Garfield County, Colorado*, [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online\\_Resources/County\\_Profiles/Colorado/cp08045.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Colorado/cp08045.pdf)

950 jobs and generates \$140 million in revenue.<sup>2</sup> Those economic drivers rely on the recreational flows provided by Shoshone's call to support a river recreation industry that contributes \$18.8 billion in economic output and over \$10 billion annually to the Colorado's GDP, with nearly \$4 billion coming directly from the Colorado River Basin on the Western Slope<sup>3</sup>. The Colorado River Basin holds the second largest number of river recreation jobs at 26,800 and supports \$555 million in tax revenues.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, communities along the Colorado River in Garfield County also benefit from the enhanced water quality Shoshone flows provide, diluting pollutants in the source drinking water for towns like New Castle, Silt, Rifle, and Parachute. Without the higher flows provided by the Shoshone flows, higher pollutant concentrations and turbidity result in increased costs for municipal drinking and wastewater treatment that are ultimately passed to residents of these municipalities.

Garfield County is aligned with the mission and goals of the Colorado Water Conservation Board to preserve the natural environment. The acceptance of the ISF donation supports: the health of the Colorado River and its tributaries; resilient watersheds within the Colorado River Basin; habitat conservation; and recreation and tourism.

If the Shoshone Plant reduces or permanently ceases operation without permanent protection of the water right through an instream flow, the negative impacts to aquatic life and riparian ecosystems, to river recreation, and the economic impact to agriculture and municipal water providers to Garfield County, the Western Slope, and to the State of Colorado will be serious and irreversible.

Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.



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Heather K. Beattie  
Garfield County Attorney

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<sup>2</sup> 2018 Middle Colorado Watershed Council, *The Economic Contribution of Recreation in the Middle Colorado Watershed*, <https://midcowatershed.org/resources> (report located under Partner Resources).

<sup>3</sup> 2019 Business for Water Stewardship, *Economic Contributions of Water-related Outdoor Recreation in Colorado*, <https://businessforwater.org/co-rivers-key-to-economy> (total economic output calculated with the multiplier effect).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*