

BEFORE THE COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

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

NOTICE OF PARTY STATUS: UTE WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Pursuant to 2 CCR 408-2 6m.(5)(e), Ute Water Conservancy District hereby submits its Notice of Party Status as follows:

1. Name and Mailing Address:

Ute Water Conservancy District
2190 H1/4 Road
Grand Junction, Colorado 81505
Attn.: Greg Williams

With copy to:
Christopher Geiger
Balcomb & Green, P.C.
P.O. Drawer 790
Glenwood Springs, CO 81602

2. Basis for Party Status:

Ute Water Conservancy District (Ute Water) is a signatory to the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement, which seeks among other things to maintain the flow regime generated by the operation of the Shoshone Power Plant water rights and to facilitate the acquisition of the Shoshone water rights by a Western Slope government entity. Ute Water has pledged \$2 million toward the acquisition of these water rights by the Colorado River Water Conservation District for donation to the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Given this history, Ute Water has a direct and immediate interest in the subject matter of this hearing.

Colorado River water users benefit greatly from the Shoshone flows, and we are motivated to protect those benefits in perpetuity. These flows provide critical habitat to four fish listed under the Endangered Species Act in the 15-Mile Reach of the Colorado River. For most of the year, the river would not meet the flow targets set by the Upper Colorado Endangered Fish Recovery Program without the contribution of the Shoshone flows. All Colorado River water users – both east and west slope users – rely upon the benefits of the Shoshone flows as the foundation for the success of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and to provide continued compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

In addition, Shoshone permanency will preserve Historic User Pool (HUP) water supplies and allow Colorado's \$11.9 billion agricultural economy to continue alongside critical habitat

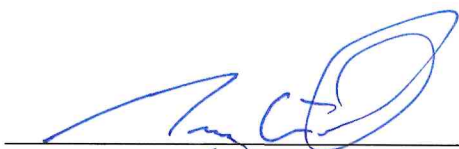
protections under the Recovery Program.¹ For these reasons, Shoshone flows are one of the four identified long-term protection measures for the Upper Colorado River Wild and Scenic River Alternative Management Plan.

Communities large and small along the Colorado River mainstem benefit from the enhanced water quality the Shoshone flows provide, diluting pollutants in source water supplies used for drinking water in towns like New Castle, Rifle, Palisade, Clifton, and the greater Grand Valley area served by Ute Water. Without the higher flows provided by the Shoshone call, Ute Water and other municipal suppliers experience higher pollutant concentrations in our supply sources, which increase costs to the public to achieve regulatory compliance for municipal drinking and wastewater treatment.

Western Slope communities also depend on Colorado River flows for agriculture uses that include not only farms and ranches but irrigation for subdivisions, parks, and other public environments. Further, commercial river outfitters and recreationalists using the river need these flows to support a river recreation industry that contributes \$18.8 billion in economic output and over \$10 billion annually to the state's GDP, with nearly \$4 billion coming directly from the Colorado River basin on the Western Slope². In recognition of these diverse benefits, protection and permanent preservation of the historical flow regime created by the Shoshone Plant is a Tier 1 project within the Colorado Basin Roundtable Basin Implementation Plan incorporated as part of the Colorado Water Plan.

During the last 23 years of severe drought, the benefit of the Shoshone call to the flow of the river has become even more evident and important. If the power plant were to cease operation without permanent protection of the water right through an instream flow, the negative economic and environmental impacts to Western Colorado and to the State of Colorado would be immediate and profound.

Dated this 9th day of July, 2025.



Greg Williams – General Manager
Ute Water Conservancy District

¹ Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade, 2019.

² 2019 Business for Water Stewardship Report (<https://businessforwater.org/co-rivers-key-to-economy>); Total economic output calculated with the multiplier effect.