

August 20, 2008

Honorable Ken Salazar  
U.S. Senate  
702 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Salazar:

Recently, Senator McCain was quoted in press accounts as suggesting that the Colorado River Basin States renegotiate the Colorado River Compact. Senator McCain has sent a letter to Senator Allard to clarify his remarks. However, at least one Basin State Governor has indicated a willingness to re-visit the Compact. We are writing in support of comments you and other Colorado leaders made in response, that Colorado would not be interested in any such renegotiation.

The allocations of water among the basin states are established not only by the Colorado River Compact, but also by the Upper Colorado River Compact, the Boulder Canyon Project Act, the Decree in *Arizona v. California*, and a treaty with Mexico. The operations of the federal reservoirs on the River that store and deliver water in furtherance of these allocations are dictated by federal law and complex operational guidelines developed by the Secretary of the Interior in close consultation with the states.

Nearly twenty years ago, Colorado led the states toward a ten-year negotiation process of operational policies that would allocate surplus water on the River. These policies were founded on a promise by California that it would end its long-standing dependence on water from the River in excess of its apportionment. Subsequent policies and agreements forged by those negotiations affirm the allocations among the basin states.

Immediately after those negotiations were concluded, the River Basin entered its worst drought on record. The states immediately began discussing how to deal with shortages on the River that will inevitably occur. After some two years of negotiation, supported by the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Reclamation, the states developed a far reaching proposal that will guide management of the River for the next decades.

This management framework, adopted by Interior last year, establishes operational guidelines for shortages and coordinated river operations. Perhaps more importantly, the framework provides a basis for the states to work together to develop conservation and efficiency projects, desalination projects, water importation and other innovations that will stretch the River to meet increasing

demands. The states entered into an agreement further affirming the law of the river.

These projects are premised upon the allocations established by the law of the river. In fact, without those allocations, the states would lack the foundation upon which to develop these proposals. The law of the river should not be swept aside and new allocations established by discussions among the Governors.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue of critical importance to Colorado.

R. Eric Kuhn  
Colorado River Water Conservation District

Chips Barry  
Denver Water

Eric Wilkinson  
Don Carlson  
Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District

James W. Broderick  
Southeastern Colorado Water  
Conservancy District

Bruce Whitehead  
John Barlow Spear  
Southwestern Water Conservation District

Alan Hamel  
Board of Water Works of  
Pueblo

Mark Pifher  
City of Aurora

Bruce McCormick  
Water Services Officer  
Colorado Springs Utilities

David Robbins

Lee E. Miller

James S. Lochhead

cc: Honorable John McCain  
Honorable Wayne Allard  
Honorable Bill Ritter  
Honorable Bob Schaffer  
Honorable Mark Udall  
Honorable Marilyn Musgrave  
Honorable John Salazar  
Honorable Doug Lamborn  
Honorable Tom Tancredo  
Honorable Ed Perlmutter  
Honorable Diana DeGette  
Harris Sherman  
Jennifer Gimbel