



SHOSHONE

WATER RIGHT PRESERVATION

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Ute Water Approves \$2 Million Contribution for Shoshone Preservation *Committed funds highlight West Slope dedication to bringing Shoshone Permanency to fruition.*

Grand Junction, Colorado — During an evening board meeting on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, the Ute Water Conservancy District Board of Directors voted unanimously in favor of a \$2 million contribution toward the West Slope’s purchase of the Shoshone water rights on the Colorado River – an effort formally launched with the signing of a Purchase & Sale Agreement (PSA) between the Colorado River District and Xcel Energy on December 19. The historic PSA marked an important step for the Shoshone Water Right Preservation Campaign as a commitment to transfer ownership of the very senior, nonconsumptive Shoshone water rights to the River District for \$98.5 million.

Ute Water Conservancy District – the largest domestic water provider between Denver and Salt Lake City – has long been a partner in the Shoshone permanency effort as one of 17 West Slope signatories to the 2013 Colorado River Cooperative Agreement (CRCA). Founded by a group of Grand Valley farmers, Ute Water provides 90,000 West Slope residents with clean, reliable drinking water.

“Our Board of Directors understands the importance, significance, and historical opportunity that is currently presented through the Shoshone Water Right Preservation. By committing \$2 million to the preservation efforts, we are supporting West Slope water quality improvement, ecosystem benefits that positively impact the endangered fish species, as well as our local recreation and agriculture partners by keeping base flows adequate in dry years. We encourage other Mesa County agencies to join us in fiscally supporting the preservation efforts to keep these flows on the West Slope,” stated Larry Clever, Ute Water General Manager.

Ute Water’s \$2 million pledge comes just two weeks after the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) voted unanimously to appropriate \$20 million in state funding for Shoshone Water Right Preservation.

“We’re incredibly grateful for Ute Water’s meaningful contribution toward Shoshone permanency and heartened by the excitement from coalition partners to bring this effort across the finish line,” stated Andy Mueller, Colorado River District General Manager. “Protecting Shoshone’s flows in

perpetuity is a long-term investment in water security for all of Colorado and for the many water users and municipalities in the Grand Valley that face a hotter, drier future.”

The broad-based Shoshone Water Right Preservation Coalition will continue to seek diversely-sourced funding to fulfill the final \$98.5 million purchase price and additional PSA closing conditions by the end of 2027, including negotiation of an instream flow agreement in partnership with the state.

A durable solution and multi-generational investment, Shoshone permanency will ultimately provide priceless benefits for water users on both sides of the divide. More information about the Shoshone Water Right Preservation Campaign & Coalition can be found at: www.KeepShoshoneFlowing.org.

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