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**CONTACT:**

Garfield County, Renelle Lott – 970.366.2275  
Colorado River District, Lindsay DeFrates –  
970.456.8973

**Garfield County commits \$3 million to Shoshone Water Right  
Preservation**

*Local and state sources have now pledged \$54.15 million of the \$99 million needed to permanently protect the Shoshone water rights.*

**Garfield County, Colorado** — On June 10, the Garfield County Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously to approve a commitment of \$3 million to support the purchase and permanent protection of the water rights associated with the Shoshone Hydroelectric Power Plant. The flows provided by these senior, non-consumptive water rights are essential for maintaining agricultural and recreational economies, and for providing municipal water resources in Garfield County.

The total purchase price for the water rights is \$99 million. The Colorado River Water Conservation District has secured commitments of over \$14 million from 19 Western Slope partners, with Garfield County (\$3 million), the City of Glenwood Springs (\$2 million), Eagle County (\$2 million), and the Ute Water Conservancy District (\$2 million) pledging large contributions, among others.

The commissioners plan to dedicate the county's Conservation Trust Fund allocation, among other funding sources, toward the water right purchase. They noted the flow is vital to local economic development and sustainability.

The county pledged the funds to boost the dedicated, visionary efforts by the Colorado River District on behalf of a growing coalition of communities and agencies in western Colorado to preserve Western Slope water rights into the future.

"I've been working on this for more than 16 years, and I hope and pray that it becomes a reality," said **Commissioner Mike Samson**. "We still have a long way to go, but what a blessing this will be for the Western Slope, as well as other regions down the river. If more is needed from us, we'll talk again ... it's the importance of water, which is the lifeblood of the West."

Located in Glenwood Canyon on the Colorado River, the Shoshone Hydroelectric Plant holds senior, nonconsumptive water rights which date back to 1902. These water rights provide vital water supplies to the river, while generating enough electricity to serve roughly 15,000 homes (15 megawatts). The Colorado River flows for approximately 80 river miles in Garfield County, from Glenwood Canyon to the Mesa County line.



"I'm comfortable at the \$3 million level. It's right here in the heart of Garfield County," said **Commissioner Tom Jankovsky** in expressing his support. "It's recreation, it's agriculture, oil and gas, it's domestic water – it is the building block of our economy."

"The Shoshone call provides critical water supplies that drive the recreational economies supported by rafters, kayakers, and anglers from Eagle to Mesa County," the River District's memo to the board notes. "Shoshone's flows also provide critical habitat to four fish listed under the Endangered Species Act, and water security and quality to our Western Slope agriculture and many of our cities who utilize the mainstem of the Colorado for drinking water supplies and wastewater discharge."

"This is a 50- to 100-year issue. We need to make a step now and think long term," expressed **Commissioner John Martin**. "We are very committed to preserving the Shoshone water diversion right, which protects the Western Slope like no other action in history."

"The county's leadership and significant investment in protecting these critical water rights will go a long way to ensure the future of water security for communities throughout Garfield County," said **Colorado River District General Manager Andy Mueller**. "The counties on the West Slope act as anchor points for managing natural resources, and their support for this project demonstrates its importance to the future of the people and the economies they represent."

Last December, the Colorado River District, on behalf of a growing coalition of West Slope water entities and local governments, signed a purchase and sale agreement with Xcel Energy to secure and protect the Shoshone water rights for the price of \$99 million.

Since then, 19 West Slope water entities and local governments, including Garfield County, have contributed \$14.15 million in local funding. In addition to the \$20 million appropriated by the state through the Colorado Water Conservation Board Projects Bill (HB24-1435), and the \$20 million from the Colorado River District's Community Funding Partnership program, \$54.15 million has been raised so far.

The broad-based Shoshone Water Right Preservation Coalition is working with local, state, and federal sources to secure funds for the remainder of the \$99 million purchase price. At the same time, the Colorado River District continues to negotiate an instream flow agreement in partnership with the state to ensure that the water will continue to flow regardless of the status of power production at the Shoshone Hydroelectric Plant in Glenwood Canyon.

A durable solution and multi-generational investment, Shoshone permanency will 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](http://www.KeepShoshoneFlowing.org).