San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program
Water Development Steering Committee

September 8, 2006

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

SUBJECT: Signing of the Cooperative Agreement Extension for the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

On October 28, 1992, Secretary Manuel Lujan signed the Cooperative Agreement to establish the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program, along with the Governors of Colorado, New Mexico, and the tribal governors of the Navajo Nation, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe. The term of the initial cooperative agreement was 15 years. Subsequent federal legislation requires that this cooperative agreement be extended one year prior to its expiration, or by October 28, 2006.

As chair of the Water Development Steering Committee, I am writing to request that you to sign the extension of the Cooperative Agreement for this very important program. Water development interests in New Mexico and Colorado have participated in the Program since its inception through the Steering Committee.

The San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program was established to achieve two goals, 1) to conserve populations of federally listed Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker, consistent with the recovery goals established under the federal Endangered Species Act, and 2) to proceed with water development in the basin in compliance with federal and state laws, interstate compacts, Supreme Court decrees, and federal trust responsibilities to the tribes. Program participants include federal agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs), the States of Colorado and New Mexico, the four tribes, and water development interests. This successful program is achieving its goals.

The Program has consistently enjoyed bipartisan support from the governors of Colorado and New Mexico, and our congressional delegations.

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Through this successful collaborative approach, we have avoided conflicts over Endangered Species Act implementation that has occurred in other areas. No lawsuits have been filed challenging ESA compliance for water projects under this Program.

We would very much appreciate your support for continuing the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program.

Sincerely,

L. Randy Kirkpatrick
Chair, Water Development Steering Committee
San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program

cc: Senator Pete Domenici
Senator Jeff Bingaman
Senator Wayne Allard
Senator Ken Salazar
Governor Bill Owens
Governor Bill Richardson
Robert Johnson, Commissioner USBR
Dale Hall, Director, USFWS

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