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June 19, 2019

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RE: Platte River Recovery Implementation Program First Increment Extension (S. 990 and H.R. 3237)

Dear Members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation,

National Audubon Society works throughout the Americas using science, policy, education, and on-the-ground conservation. State and regional programs (such as Audubon Rockies – which works in CO, WY, UT - and Audubon Nebraska), nature centers, chapters, and partners give Audubon an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire, and unite diverse communities in conservation action. The mission of our nonprofit conservation organization, which has been active since 1905, is to protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow.

On behalf of the Audubon staff and approximately 33,000 Audubon members in Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska, we thank you and applaud your leadership and unanimous, bipartisan support for extending the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP). This collaborative program has not only successfully served the threatened and endangered species of the Platte River Basin (notably Piping Plovers, Least Terns, and Whooping Cranes) but also the people who live there. Having begun in 1997, this multiple state effort remains a good example of how sustainable stewardship of targeted species like these require partnership and communication across state lines. When the governors of Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska joined with the Secretary of Interior to sign the “Cooperative Agreement for Platte River Research and Other Efforts Relating to Endangered Species Habitat along the Central Platte River, Nebraska”, they understood this common-sense approach would prevent years of courtroom battles over limited water supplies and individual river species.

The Program works to increase stream flows in the central Platte River during relevant time periods; enhances, restores and protects habitat for target bird species; and accommodates new water-related activities. The Program also operates with the required underlying principles that land be acquired only from willing participants and actions avoid increasing tax burdens to local citizens by paying taxes or their equivalent on Platte River Recovery Implementation Program lands.

PRRIP is important for many Coloradans, Wyomingites, and Nebraskans as it allows irrigation, ranching, development and recreation projects, with reduced regulatory burden while addressing the needs of threatened and endangered species. Thank you for your service to the Centennial State and leadership in Congress. If we may be of any assistance as these bills proceed, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my staff.

Sincerely,



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