



August 8, 2019

Senator Kerry Donovan  
State Capitol Building  
200 E. Colfax Ave #339  
Denver CO 80203

*RE: Funding the Colorado Water Plan*

Dear Senator Donovan:

Aspen is known for its accessible yet pristine environment, unparalleled recreational opportunities, and a quality of life that is near perfect. Our water resources are the key element to all of that. However, a variable climate and a growing population of residents and visitors – in Aspen and in the entire state of Colorado – threaten our ability to protect and preserve our most precious resource...water.

The Colorado Water Plan is the product of decades of statewide negotiations and collaboration. It was conceived to address the looming gap between available water supplies and projected water demands. Addressing this gap is critical to Aspen as we face a vulnerable future where our supplies may not be sufficient to meet forecasted demands. Aspen currently has less than one day of storage available to meet its water needs. Any increase in demand or threat to our supplies could impact our ability to serve water to our residents and visitors. Additional storage in Aspen is a high priority in the Colorado Basin Implementation Plan as part of the overall Colorado Water Plan.

The Plan also identifies the need to protect and conserve water for environmental and recreational benefits – essential components of Aspen's economy and quality of life. Flows in the stretch of the Roaring Fork River in Aspen are significantly altered due to trans-basin diversions, resulting in an inability to meet the environmental and recreational flow needs of the river in even average years. Aspen recently sponsored and participated in a Stream Management Plan to begin to understand how to address those concerns. However, the City does not have funding to support significant operational changes or new projects.

While Aspen is a water leader in so many ways – we created the State's first QWEL (Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper) certification program – like our sister cities, we, too, have needs that surpass our funding resources. We applaud the State for taking the initiative in 2015 to create the Colorado Water Plan which addresses the need to balance demands with responsible use of this important resource. Now it's time to fund it. Creating storage, increasing efficiencies, and improving the watershed are projects that are identified and supported in the Colorado Water Plan. Securing funding to complete these projects is

critical to Aspen's future. Funding water projects is not cheap, but if we don't move quickly to fund solutions we may end-up with problems that money can't solve!

We are grateful to have thoughtful and hard-working legislators like you in office. We respectfully encourage you and our fellow legislators to find a long-term, sustainable source of funding for the Colorado Water Plan. We also implore you establish a robust, open, transparent, and state-wide process for prioritizing projects that receive funding and support from the state level.

Sincerely,



Torre, MAYOR, CITY OF ASPEN

Skippy Mesirov, Ann Mullins, Ward Hauenstein, Rachael Richards, CITY COUNCIL



Ward Hauenstein

Ann Mullins

Skippy Mesirov