

For Immediate Release: July 25, 2013

CONTACT:

Stephen Koenigsberg, 303-861-3030, skpublicrelations@yahoo.com

## **Colorado River Day in Denver Attracts City Leaders and Rural Voices United in the Call for Water Conservation and Healthy River Flows**

Denver, CO -- Today's Colorado River Day celebration, taking place in Denver and four other western cities on the river's 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday, honors the waterway that serves as the backbone of the West's economy and a critical drinking source for millions.

In its second year, the event brings together urban and rural constituencies who in solidarity are calling on the Department of Interior and state governors across the basin region to implement strategies that focus on improving the urban and agricultural efficiency with which the basin states consume the Colorado River's water. The seven Colorado River states and the Department of Interior are now meeting to determine next steps on urban water conservation, agricultural water conservation and how to keep healthy flow in the river. Conservation practices are the most cost-efficient and expedient way to effectively address the river's supply and demand imbalance. The groups organizing Colorado River Day -- National Young Farmers Coalition, Save the Colorado, Protect the Flows, and Nuestro Rio -- are asking for an actionable plan to improve conservation and river flow, not just further study.

Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, an ardent supporter of common sense solutions to water imbalances that promote efficiency while also providing water for our cities, communities and farms, said, "We have a big stake in the future of the Colorado River and how we will meet the challenges of increasing population, long-term drought and climate change. Denver citizens use 20 percent less water than they were using 10 years ago. But municipal use is only part of the picture, and conservation and reuse alone will not solve our future issues. We believe the best approach is to work together as a community of seven states that share this vital resource to discuss measures to meet our challenges."

Mayor Hancock, other Colorado city and rural leaders, as well as city leaders in other basin states, have signed a statement supporting improved urban and agricultural water conservation as a means to improve their communities' water security and sustain a healthy flowing Colorado River for generations to come.

In addition to Mayor Hancock, signors include:

Mayor Neal Schwieterman, Paonia, CO  
Mayor Buck, Fruita, CO  
Councilman Bennet Boschenstein, Grand Junction, CO

Councilwoman Judy Montero, Denver, CO  
Councilman Joel Kincaid, Fruita, CO  
Mayor Jonathan Rothschild, Tucson, AZ  
Mayor David Coss, Santa Fe, NM  
Councilman Steven Ross, Las Vegas, NV  
Councilwoman Anita Wood, North Las Vegas, NV  
City Council President Pro Tem Sherri Lightner, San Diego, CA

The statement of commitment supports robust progress for urban and agricultural water conservation in the Southwest. The statement was launched today with a handful of founding signees at the event. After one month of collecting additional signatures from locally elected officials, the statement will be delivered to state and Department of Interior officials who are currently weighing next steps on water conservation and how to maintain healthy river flows. These state and federal actors are participating in stakeholder workgroups that were created in the wake of the Bureau of Reclamation's [Colorado River Basin Study](#) and are set to conclude their work and offer recommendations next year.

Denver and many other Colorado cities rely on the river for drinking water. About 61% of irrigated agriculture acreage in Colorado depends on the Colorado River. Recreation on the river and its tributaries results in nearly \$10 billion in economic output annually and supports nearly 80,000 jobs in the state.

Colorado River Day brings people together across divides in support of maintaining a sustainable Colorado River. Last year, progressives and conservatives came together in support of river. This year, urban and rural interests unite. It takes place on July 25th each year, as this was the day in 1921 when Congress re-named the river from the "Grand" to the "Colorado". It is produced by a wide coalition of organizations including National Young Farmers Union, Save the Colorado. Protect the Flows and Nuestro Rio.

[www.ColoradoRiverDay.com](http://www.ColoradoRiverDay.com)