December 30, 2021

Dear Commissioners Batchelder, Peters and Tisdel,

I am writing to express concern regarding the rapid timeline underway to appoint the next Ouray County representative to the Colorado River Water Conservation District (CRWCD.) With the application deadline of December 29, 2020 and a scheduled appointment date of January 5, 2021 (with a holiday weekend falling between those dates) it appears there may not be time for applicant interviews and certainly not the possibility of identifying prospective appointees and their credentials in the *Ouray Plaindealer* to inform the public and/or provide opportunity for public input.

I recall when Planning Commission seats are vacant and appointments are anticipated, there is typically an article published in the official county newspaper describing the applicants, and interviews are conducted by the BOCC. Similarly, last month when a Ridgway Town Council seat came open for appointment, there was an article published in the *Plaindealer* so the residents were informed of the applicants and their experiences. Given that there is only one Ouray County representative to the CRWCD and the meetings are held outside of Ouray County, it seems even more important that the appointment process be transparent and applicants’ credentials be available for the public to review.

I am aware that state statute indicates the CRWCD representative shall be appointed at the first BOCC meeting of the year, however I understand that there is precedent for counties not complying with this statute but rather making the appointment before the first CRWCD meeting of the year which I understand is January 19 in 2021.

All of this being said, the notice of the January 5 BOCC meeting agenda and packet arrived in my inbox late this afternoon. I see you have received letters of interest for this appointment from four applicants. If I take their respective letters of intent as the sole source of information, it is apparent to me that Mr. Denison and Ms. Padgett are highly qualified for this appointment and both have extensive experience working in Ouray County on relevant water issues and projects. They appear committed to serving all Ouray County and both have experience representing our county on water-related boards. I particularly like that these two applicants specify a commitment to water conservation and efficiencies during this time of extended drought which may, in fact, be the new normal for our region. Though Ms. Whitmore currently serves as representative, her letter certainly does not illuminate her qualifications. Furthermore, I understand that as an attorney, Ms. Whitmore represents clients that could result in a conflict of interest.

I take this appointment very seriously and wish you would consider allowing more time for public review of applicants’ credentials and offer an opportunity greater than two business days for public input.

If you decide to go forward with an appointment on January 5, please consider my input provided in this letter.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our County. Best wishes to Commissioners Batchelder and Peters as you leave the Commission having served through this unprecedented, challenging time.

Respectfully,

Robyn Cascade

Ridgway, CO