## SOUTHWEST BASINS ROUNDTABLE

**Michael Preston, Chair**

**c/o Dolores Water Conservancy District**

**P.O. Box 1150**

**Cortez, Colorado 81321**

**970-565-7562**

October 16, 2018

Ben Wade, Engagement and Innovation Program

Colorado Water Conservation Board

1313 Sherman St., Room 718

Denver, CO 80203

RE: Silverton Science and Innovation Center

Dear Ben,

This letter is in support of the Silverton Science and Innovation Center (SSIC) proposal submitted to the Engagement and Innovation Program by Mountain Studies Institute.

The years of effort on the part of the Animas River Stakeholders Group in the Silverton area, and the Gold King Mine Spill into the Animas River in the Summer of 2015, followed by Super Fund designation set the stage for this effort to establish the Silverton Science and Innovation Center.

The establishment of the SSIC is timely given the challenges and opportunities currently faced in the Bonita Peak Mining District. The work of the Innovation Center will be of use in the many headwaters communities in the State of Colorado, with mining histories which present similar risks and challenges.

The Innovation Center is also an important economic development opportunity for Silverton and San Juan County, certified as a Colorado Opportunity Zone, USDA Drought Disaster Zone and Wildfire Disaster Area. The financial impact of the 416 fire of 2018 on the Silverton business community was devastating and the Innovation Center can provide an important boost to Silverton’s recovery.

The proposed project is well aligned with the Colorado Water Plan including Colorado values on building a productive and vibrant community, efficient and effective water infrastructure, and a strong environment that improves mine related impairments to advance healthy watersheds, rivers, streams and wildlife (CWP, p. 1-6).

The Animas River Stakeholders Group, Southwest Basin Implementation Plan IPP 23-A, has been advocating such Innovation for over a decade and will a leadership partner in the formation of the Silverton Science and Innovation Center.

Please give this application your utmost consideration. You can contact me at 970-565-7562, mpreston@frontier.net, if you have questions or wish to discuss this application in more detail.

Sincerely,

Michael Preston, Chair

Southwest Basin Roundtable