



COLORADO OUTDOOR RECREATION & ECONOMY ACT

CORE ACT Letters of Support (LOS) Index

1. Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado
2. San Miguel County Board of County Commissioners
3. Gunnison County Board of Commissioners
4. Eagle County Board of Commissioners
5. San Juan County
6. Summit County Board of County Commissioners
7. Ouray County Board of County Commissioners
8. Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners
9. Town of Crested Butte
10. Town of Carbondale
11. City of Glenwood Springs
12. Town of Telluride
13. Town of Basalt
14. Town of Breckenridge
15. Town of Ophir
16. Town of Ridgeway
17. Conservation Colorado
18. National Parks Conservation Association

19. The Conservation Alliance
20. Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
21. Wilderness Workshop
22. Roaring Fork Audubon Society
23. Roaring Fork Group, Colorado Chapter of the Sierra Club
24. Solar Energy International
25. Carbondale Historical Society
26. Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association
27. International Mountain Bicycling Association
28. Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
29. National Wildlife Federation
30. Trout Unlimited
31. Town of Mountain Village
32. Great Old Broads for Wilderness
33. Town of Snowmass Village
34. Town of Frisco
35. The Trust for Public Land
36. Town of Dillon



COLORADO

Governor Jared Polis

March 26, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senator

The Honorable Cory Gardner
United States Senator

The Honorable Scott Tipton
Member of Congress

The Honorable Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

The Honorable Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

The Honorable Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

The Honorable Ken Buck
Member of Congress

The Honorable Jason Crow
Member of Congress

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

Dear Honorable Members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation:

I write to express my strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (S.241/H.R.823) (CORE Act) for its balanced approach to protecting public lands across Colorado to benefit future generations and our outdoor recreation economy. The designations in the CORE Act are the result of years of collaborative decision-making and many rounds of adjustments and compromises. The result of these locally-driven efforts is legislation that has been thoroughly vetted and includes protections to benefit all Coloradans.

The CORE Act unites four separate legislative efforts to protect spectacular public lands along the Continental Divide and at Camp Hale, the Thompson Divide, in the San Juan Mountains and at the Curecanti National Recreation Area west of Gunnison. While these efforts were previously separate, the unifying factors that bring them together are the strong local support for the designations in each area and the significant benefits that they would provide to all Coloradans.

As a Member of Congress, I was proud to champion the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness and Camp Hale Legacy Act with Senator Bennet. The CORE Act integrates that proposal protecting about 100,000 acres along the Continental Divide by expanding existing wilderness areas and establishing the Tenmile, Hoosier Ridge and Williams Fork wilderness areas; protecting the only high-elevation wildlife migration corridor over Interstate 70 and conserving habitat for the Greater sage-grouse and



other wildlife; and establishing a recreation management area in the Tenmile Range to protect access to world-class outdoor recreation, such as mountain biking, hiking, and hunting.

The CORE Act also designates Camp Hale as our nation's first National Historic Landscape to honor the service of the 10th Mountain Division soldiers who trained there to fight in the Italian Alps in World War II before returning home to start the outdoor recreation industry as we know it today. The bill would improve the protection and interpretation of Camp Hale's historic resources, secure existing recreational opportunities, establish a process for the long term clean-up of legacy hazards at the site, and protect the area's natural resources.

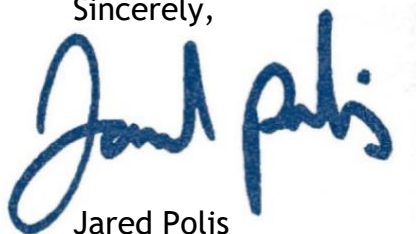
About 200,000 acres of one of Colorado's most treasured landscapes—the Thompson Divide and Kebler Pass area that lies south of Glenwood Springs and west of Carbondale—would gain protection from future oil and gas leasing under the CORE Act, while preserving existing private property rights for leaseholders and landowners. The bill was drafted to protect the ranching and agricultural heritage that is so critical to the local culture and economy. The bill also provides the opportunity to lease and generate energy from excess methane in existing or abandoned coal mines in the North Fork Valley—supporting the local economy and addressing climate change.

Colorado's San Juan Mountains, which are home to some of our state's most majestic peaks, like Mt. Sneffels and Wilson Peak, would gain new protections under the bill. The CORE Act would expand the Lizard Head and Mount Sneffels Wilderness Areas by about 23,000 acres and establish the new McKenna Peak Wilderness Area. The bill would also designate the popular Sheep Mountain area for special management and withdraw Naturita Canyon outside of Norwood from future mining and oil and gas leasing.

The second most visited unit of the National Park System in Colorado is the Curecanti National Recreation Area (NRA), but this area was never formally established by an Act of Congress. The Curecanti NRA welcomes upwards of one million visitors each year to boat, fish, camp and hike along the shores of one of Colorado's largest bodies of water - the Blue Mesa Reservoir. The CORE Act would formally designate the Curecanti NRA, ensure the Bureau of Reclamation upholds its commitment to expand public fishing access in the basin, and improve efficiency of land management in the NRA, which will save taxpayer dollars.

This legislation would be great for Colorado and has been carefully crafted to protect existing uses, respect valid and existing rights to water and mineral development, and balance different outdoor recreation demands. It recognizes the critical voice of local communities and counties to shape final decisions about what areas are appropriate for what type of use, including what areas are appropriate for commercial timber and energy protection. Thank you for your attention to this carefully crafted and important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jared Polis", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Jared Polis
Governor



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

HILARY COOPER KRIS HOLSTROM LANCE WARING

Senator Michael Bennet
Congressman Joe Neguse
c/o John_Whitney@bennet.senate.gov
Patrick_Donovan@bennet.senate.gov
Bo.Morris@mail.house.gov

February 8, 2019

Dear Senator Bennet and Congressman Neguse,

San Miguel County has been engaged in the creation of the public lands protections proposed in the San Juan Mountains Wilderness bill for the last decade. The previous and current Board of Commissioners has repeatedly expressed support for the thorough and inclusive process and the resulting designations. At this time, we are excited to express our support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy Act (CORE). We praise the efforts of many stakeholders throughout the State to create one bill to preserve existing access, historic landmarks, a broad range of environmental and economic benefits and some of Colorado's most iconic vistas. The CORE Act exemplifies real leadership and attention to local collaboration at its best.

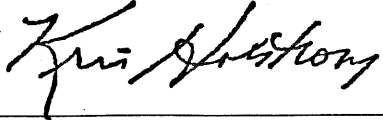
San Miguel County has been honored to join our colleagues in San Juan and Ouray Counties in unified support of the San Juan Mountains Wilderness proposals and we embrace the opportunity to join with additional Colorado counties, the Governor's Office and the Outdoor Industry Alliance in support of the CORE Act.

Thank you both for your strong commitment to the public lands we value for clean air and water and the recreation economy on which we depend. Your leadership on the CORE Act represents at least 75% of Colorado residents who identify as conservationists according to the latest Colorado College State of the Rockies poll.

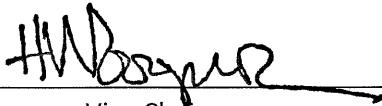
We will continue to reach out to Senator Gardner and Congressmen Tipton to gain their support for this important Act. Let us know what else we can do to help you move the CORE Act through Congress this session.

Sincerely,

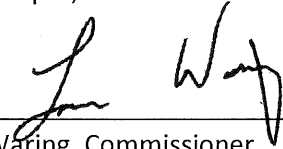
SAN MIGUEL COUNTY, COLORADO
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Kris Holstrom, Chair



Hilary Cooper, Vice Chair



Lance Waring, Commissioner



Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners

Phone: (970) 641-0248 • Fax: (970) 641-3061

Email: bocc@gunnisoncounty.org • www.GunnisonCounty.org

February 22, 2019

Senator Bennet and Representative Neguse,

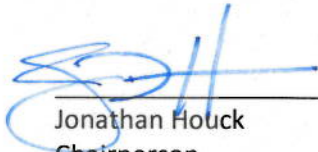
Gunnison County has long worked on and desired to see a permanent boundary designation for the Curecanti National Recreation Area. Since the construction of the Blue Mesa Reservoir in the 1950's and 60's establishing this boundary has been long awaited, and frankly long overdue. We have worked tirelessly through several decades on building a foundation of support for this effort and the overwhelming majority of Gunnison County residents seek this action. The Curecanti language in the CORE Act is an important piece of the legislation that both formalizes a prized national recreation area and memorializes the Bureau of Reclamation responsibilities to provide 26 miles of public fishing access on the Gunnison River upstream of the Aspinall Unit as mitigation for the development of Blue Mesa Reservoir. This is an incredible public lands amenity for outdoor recreationalists and sportsmen throughout the nation.

The Thompson Divide, which encompasses a good amount of norther Gunnison County, is also an area that citizens have long wanted to see protected. The Thompson Divide part of the CORE Act was the result of years of stakeholder work that included western slope counties, conservation organizations, outdoor recreation groups, extractive industries, ranching and agriculture and wildlife organizations. This collaborative process resulted in the consensus that became the elements of these protections. The CORE Act also has strong enabling legislative language that supports our efforts in coal mine methane capture and utilization and/ or mitigation in the North Fork. The politics, uses and desires of these diverse constituents have found common ground on the need to provide long-term and enduring protections for this area. The benefits to ranching, big game and recreation along with thoughtful management will keep this headwaters region providing long-term benefits for generations to come.

The CORE Act will serve as the vehicle to deliver on the promise Senator Bennet made to this community on the banks of the Slate River outside Crested Butte years ago. He challenged us to invite a diversity of stakeholders to the table and discuss what we want to see our public lands look like long into the future. The CORE Act represents the many of the outcomes this community supports. We learned that when communities collaborate and compromise through hard work, vigorous debate and meaningful discussion they have the ability to create durable protections rooted in vision and thought to future generations.

We could not be happier to see the long-term vision for Curecanti Boundary designation and the more recent vision for Thompson Divide Protections being included in the CORE Act. We look forward to continuing our work with you both and urging Senator Gardner and Representative Tipton to join us in working toward the passage of the CORE Act. Protecting some of the wild and iconic areas in Gunnison County is an opportunity for both locals and visitors to continue to have access to these areas while still seeing the immense benefits protections will bring for recreation, ranching and sporting for future generations. For all Coloradans, these areas are the source of our clean air and water and the wellspring of our identity and history and in such, worthy of our steadfast commitment to protect. Please look to Gunnison County to support and advocate for the passing of the CORE Act. We thank you for your leadership on this legislative package.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Jonathan Houck', written over a horizontal line.

Jonathan Houck
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'John Messner', written over a horizontal line.

John Messner
Vice-Chairperson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Roland Mason', written over a horizontal line.

Roland Mason
Commissioner



Board of County Commissioners

970-328-8605

970-328-8629(f)

eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us

www.eaglecounty.us

March 4, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Senator Bennet,

We are writing to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. We appreciate the leadership of the Colorado delegation to protect public lands in Colorado, and in particular the leadership of Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Joe Neguse for introducing this legislation. Our economy is based on sustainable outdoor recreation, and a major component of our residents' quality of life is our public lands.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that balance conservation and recreation that we have long supported in the Continental Divide Wilderness and Camp Hale Legacy Act. The bill would establish the Camp Hale National Historic Landscape, conferring well-deserved recognition on the Army's 10th Mountain Division which fought valiantly in World War II and was pivotal to the founding of the modern ski industry and the outdoor recreation industry. The CORE Act also includes all the areas of the Continental Divide Act, including the Spraddle Creek and No Name additions to the Holy Cross Wilderness.

The four elements of the CORE Act are all reflective of and accountable to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We are appreciative that these proposed designations were locally developed to address existing and future recreation, wildlife habitat, wildfire management, agricultural and water supply needs.

Millions of people visit Western Colorado each year, and our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. But we must have the vision to protect what is wilderness, create ongoing opportunities for sustainable recreation, and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe that the CORE Act strikes that balance.

We hope that Colorado's congressional delegation will prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress. Please let us know how we can be of assistance. And thank you for your support of Eagle County's public lands.

Sincerely,

Jeanne McQueeney

Chair

Kathy Chandler-Henry

Commissioner

Matt Scherr

Commissioner



SAN JUAN COUNTY COLORADO

1557 GREENE STREET

P.O. BOX 466

SILVERTON, COLORADO 81433

PHONE/FAX 970-387-5766 sanjuancounty@frontier.net

March 13, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support of the CORE Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton and Representative Neguse:

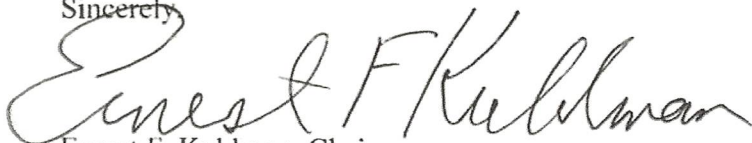
We are writing you to express our ongoing support for the San Juan Mountains Wilderness proposal, and to urge your support as well. In past correspondence, we have emphasized the consistency of our commitment to the proposal, and our belief that it will serve the residents of San Juan County and our local economy.

As you know, the San Juan Mountains proposal would designate additions to the existing Mt. Sneffels and Lizard Head Wilderness areas, create a new wilderness at McKenna Peak, establish the Sheep Mountain Special Management Area, and withdraw Naturita Canyon from mineral entry. The legislation was crafted in much the same manner as your successful Hermosa Creek legislation, with extensive stakeholder and community input, and numerous adjustments in response to individual, on-the-ground concerns. Interests consulted include ranchers, water right holders, private landowners, utility companies, miners, motorized recreationists, and local residents and businesses. As a testament to the extensive consultation done, all three affected counties, key municipalities, and over 200 local businesses have been consistent in their support.

We strongly support the CORE Act as a means to protect these public lands and also as a means to protect our economy. The outdoor economy is one of the top economic drivers for Colorado and a major driver for San Juan County. The CORE Act seeks to protect over 400,000 acres of public lands in response to the desires of our communities to provide common sense protections that provide for outdoor recreation. San Juan County requests that our Colorado congressional delegation work together to pass this critical legislation that protects public lands that are critical to our local economy.

We look forward to working with each of you toward the passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ernest F. Kuhlman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Ernest F. Kuhlman, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

970.453.3402 ph | 970.453.3535 f
www.SummitCountyCO.gov

208 East Lincoln Ave. | PO Box 68
Breckenridge, CO 80424

March 14, 2019

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gardner and Senator Bennet,

We are writing to offer our strongest support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act. This legislation represents on-going diligence to advance wilderness protections in a manner that addresses the needs and priorities of local communities, including counties, veterans, businesses, recreation groups, sportsmen and conservationists.

Summit County is very excited for the new CORE Act, of which the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness & Camp Hale Legacy Act is an integral part. We are extremely grateful to Senator Bennet and Congressman Joe Neguse for their leadership in this new effort to protect public lands. Our public lands and Wilderness areas help define Summit County and drive our recreation economy. We have waited too long for these public lands protections to pass, and we urge the rest of Colorado's congressional delegation to get behind this important new legislation that will safeguard our public lands in a balanced way.

The CORE Act would celebrate and preserve an important piece of our country's history through designation of the Camp Hale National Historic Landscape. This designation would confer well-deserved recognition on the Army's 10th Mountain Division, which played critical roles in both World War II and the genesis of the modern-day ski industry. The legislation further honors the legacy of the 10th Mountain Division by protecting 28,728 acres of natural, recreational and historical resources surrounding Camp Hale.

The Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness and Camp Hale Legacy Act is reflective of and accounts for the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with its carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We appreciate that these proposed designations address fire management, world-class outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, water supply needs, scenic viewsheds and outdoor education – many of the values and assets at the heart of Summit County's identity. Notably, areas that are now open to motorized access and/or mountain biking in Summit County would still see those uses allowed as they currently are.

It has come to our attention that certain representatives of the timber industry have recently begun expressing opposition to the CORE Act. From our perspective in Summit County, their complaints are little more than cynical and spurious political ploys, entirely undeserving of any serious consideration. Local and federal forest

lands in Summit County contain little to no marketable timber or other forest products. In fact, local and federal agencies have spent many millions of dollars here chipping, hauling and burning trees that have been cut for forest health and wildfire mitigation objectives. It is farcical, and frankly insulting, to suggest that wilderness protections in Summit County would pose even the slightest threat to the timber industry.

Millions of outdoor enthusiasts visit Summit County every year, and our federally designated lands contribute immeasurably to our local economy and quality of life. Establishing new wilderness, recreation and conservation areas requires vision, commitment and patriotism. It also requires that we, as present stewards of the land, have the foresight to pass to future generations the uniquely American heritage of conservation.

Sincerely,

The Summit County Board of Commissioners



Commissioner Karn Stiegelmeier



Commissioner Thomas C. Davidson



Commissioner Elisabeth Lawrence



JOHN E. PETERS
BEN TISDEL
DON BATCHELDER

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

P.O. Box C • Ouray, Colorado 81427 • 970-325-7320 • FAX: 970-325-0452

March 19, 2019

Senator Michael Bennet
Senator Cory Gardner
Congressman Scott Tipton
Congressman Joe Neguse
c/o john_whitney@bennet.senate.gov

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton and Representative Neguse:

The Ouray County Board of County Commissioners strongly supports the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. Ouray County has historically supported the efforts to apply Wilderness designation protections on some of the most iconic landscapes in the country, through the San Juan Mountains Wilderness proposals as evidenced by Ouray County Resolution 2016-009 (attached). The County has consistently worked together with neighboring San Juan and San Miguel counties in these efforts.

The CORE Act includes a Wilderness designation for irreplaceable wild landscapes in Gunnison, Pitkin, Eagle, and Summit Counties. Ouray County supports the statements these counties have issued regarding designations within their own jurisdictions.

Photographs and paintings of the North side of the Sneffels Range (located in Ouray County) is proudly displayed in the Colorado Supreme Court; on the Colorado State Driver's License; in the background for several Denver news channels, and of course also displayed in many of your offices in Washington D.C. The CORE Act endeavors to protect these iconic landscapes with a Wilderness designation; such a designation will ensure that others will continue to be able to be inspired by the wilderness values present in Ouray County's extraordinary landscape.

Outdoor recreation and scenic values, along with traditional ranching and mining activities, form the backbone of Ouray County's economy. Ouray County has worked with local mining industry and large acreage land owners to address their concerns with a proposed Wilderness designation, resulting in support and advocacy from those entities.

Ouray County respectfully requests that our Colorado Congressional Delegation work together to pass this landmark legislation. We thank you for your leadership on this legislative package.

Sincerely,

John E. Peters
Chair

Ben Tisdell
Vice Chair

Don Batchelder
Commissioner Member

RESOLUTION # 2016-009

**RESOLUTION
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OURAY COUNTY**

Re: Sneffels Wilderness Expansion

WHEREAS, the Sneffels range of the San Juan Mountains in Ouray County is an area of extraordinary scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational value; and

WHEREAS, the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundaries do not protect in perpetuity adjacent public lands in the Sneffels range which are capable and deserving of permanent Wilderness designation; and

WHEREAS, a proposal to expand the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundaries to include these public lands has been presented to the Ouray County Board of Commissioners as represented in a map entitled "Whitehouse Expansion Of The Mount Sneffels Wilderness" and referenced in Ouray County Resolutions 2007-075 and 2011-007; and

WHEREAS, visitors and residents of Ouray County today enjoy these public lands for hiking, camping, photography, mountain climbing, hunting, skiing, scenic enjoyment and other wilderness uses; and

WHEREAS, recreation and other uses of the public lands of Ouray County are a vital part of the local economy; and

WHEREAS, these public lands provide important mid-elevation habitat for game and non-game wildlife and help connect wildlife habitat in the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness Area to the west with habitat in the Big Blue Wilderness Area to the east; and

WHEREAS, these public lands within the proposed wilderness expansion legislation include important watershed areas for domestic and agricultural water sources including Beaver Creek, the Town of Ridgway's only source of potable water; and

WHEREAS, preservation of these public lands as designated Wilderness would better protect their scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational values in perpetuity from the adverse effects of future development; and

WHEREAS, the proposed wilderness expansion would protect all of Mount Sneffels, elevation 14,158'; and

WHEREAS, the currently unprotected north side of Mount Sneffels is one of Colorado's most iconic and most recognizable natural features and thus is the new background image on the newly redesigned Colorado Driver's Licenses; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area does not include the Dallas Trail System so that mountain bikers can continue to enjoy this beautiful and challenging trail; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area likewise does not include any roads currently open to motorized use; and

WHEREAS, ranching is an important part of the history and economy of Ouray County and portions of the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area are currently used for livestock grazing; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area is already managed by the US Forest Service in substantial measure as wilderness; and

WHEREAS, the designation as wilderness of the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area will make this special place part of a system of places wild and free for the permanent good of all; and

WHEREAS, Ouray County continues to support the specifics of the wilderness expansion:

- 8,375 acres will be added to the existing Mt. Sneffels Wilderness Area by the Liberty Bell and Last Dollar areas,
- 13,231 acres will be added to the existing Mt. Sneffels Wilderness Area by the Whitehouse area; and

WHEREAS, the proposed expansion has received approval from all of the local governments in Ouray, San Miguel, and San Juan Counties:

- Ouray County Board of County Commissioners
- Town of Ridgway
- City of Ouray
- San Miguel County Board of County Commissioners
- Town Council of Telluride
- Town of Ophir
- Town of Mountain Village
- San Juan County Board of County Commissioners; and;

WHEREAS, in November of 2009 the proposed wilderness expansion legislation was introduced to the 111th Congress as H.R. 3914: The San Juan Wilderness Act in June of 2010 was unanimously approved by the bipartisan U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, in February of 2013 the proposed wilderness expansion legislation was introduced to the 113th Congress as S. 341: The San Juan Wilderness Act and in September of 2013 was passed with bipartisan support by the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee; and

WHEREAS, the process of the proposed wilderness expansion has been a model process led by local citizens and local governments, which has included early contact of all grazing allotment holders, mining claim owners, water rights owners, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners has previously supported the San Juan Wilderness Act with Resolution 2011-007 attached hereto as *Exhibit A*; and

WHEREAS, a map of the proposed wilderness expansion legislation supported by Ouray County by Resolution 2011-007 and this Resolution is attached hereto as *Exhibit B*; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners has previously supported the San Juan Wilderness Act with Resolution 2007-075 and this Resolution is attached hereto as *Exhibit C*; and

WHEREAS, we wish to see this model process and the San Juan Wilderness Expansion be successful.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:

- That Congress enact legislation to designate the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area as permanent wilderness,
- That the legislation includes appropriate language to protect existing water rights including those of the Town of Ridgway, as well as reasonable motorized access to maintain such rights, and


- That the legislation includes appropriate language to permit livestock grazing to continue in the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area as provided under current law, including reasonable motorized access to facilitate use of livestock grazing; and
- That the Secretary retain statutory authority to take such measures as necessary to control fire, insects, and disease in the wilderness areas designated by the wilderness expansion legislation.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 15TH DAY OF March, 2016.

Voting for: Commissioners Padgett, Tisdell + Batchelder
 Voting against: NONE

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO

Attest:


Michelle Nauer
 Michelle Nauer, Clerk and Recorder
 By: Hannah Hollenbeck, Deputy Clerk of the Board

Lynn M. Padgett
 Lynn M. Padgett, Chair
Ben Tisdell
 Ben Tisdell, Vice-Chair
Don Batchelder
 Don Batchelder, Commissioner

RESOLUTION # 2011-007

**RESOLUTION
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OURAY COUNTY**

Re: Sneffels Wilderness Expansion

WHEREAS, the Sneffels range of the San Juan Mountains in Ouray County is an area of extraordinary scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational value; and

WHEREAS, the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundaries do not protect in perpetuity adjacent public lands in the Sneffels range which are capable and deserving of permanent Wilderness designation; and

WHEREAS, a proposal to expand the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundaries to include these public lands has been presented to the Ouray County Board of Commissioners as represented in a map entitled "Whitehouse Expansion Of The Mount Sneffels Wilderness" and referenced in Ouray County Resolution 2007-075; and

WHEREAS, visitors and residents of Ouray County today enjoy these public lands for hiking, camping, photography, mountain climbing, hunting, skiing, scenic enjoyment and other wilderness uses; and

WHEREAS, recreation and other uses of the public lands of Ouray County are a vital part of the local economy; and

WHEREAS, these public lands provide important mid-elevation habitat for game and non-game wildlife and help connect wildlife habitat in the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness Area to the west with habitat in the Big Blue Wilderness Area to the east; and

WHEREAS, these public lands include important watershed areas for domestic and agricultural water sources including Beaver Creek, the Town of Ridgway's only source of potable water; and

WHEREAS, preservation of these public lands as designated Wilderness would better protect their scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational values in perpetuity from the adverse effects of future development; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area does not include the Dallas Trail System so that mountain bikers can continue to enjoy this beautiful and challenging trail; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area likewise does not include any roads currently open to motorized use; and

WHEREAS, ranching is an important part of the history and economy of Ouray County and portions of the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area are currently used for livestock grazing; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area is already managed by the US Forest Service in substantial measure as wilderness; and

WHEREAS, the designation as wilderness of the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area will make this special place part of a system of places wild and free for the permanent good of all; and

WHEREAS, Ouray County continues to support the specifics of the wilderness expansion:

- 8,375 acres will be added to the existing Mt. Sneffels Wilderness Area by the Liberty Bell and Last Dollar areas,
- 13,231 acres will be added to the existing Mt. Sneffels Wilderness Area by the Whitehouse area; and

WHEREAS, the proposed expansion has received approval from all of the local governments in Ouray, San Miguel, and San Juan Counties; and

WHEREAS, in June of 2010 the proposed wilderness expansion legislation was unanimously approved by the bipartisan U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the process of the proposed wilderness expansion has been a model process led by local citizens and local governments, which has included early contact of all grazing allotment holders, mining claim owners, water rights owners, and other stakeholders by former Congressman Salazar and his staff; and

WHEREAS, we wish to see this model process and the San Juan Wilderness Expansion be successful.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:

- That Congress enact legislation to designate the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area as permanent wilderness,
- That the legislation includes appropriate language to protect existing water rights including those of the Town of Ridgway, as well as reasonable motorized access to maintain such rights, and
- That the legislation includes appropriate language to permit livestock grazing to continue in the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area as provided under current law, including reasonable motorized access to facilitate use of livestock grazing.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 1st DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2011.

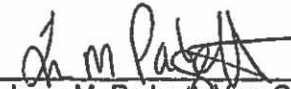
Voting for: Commissioners Albritton and Padgett

Voting against: Commissioner Fedel

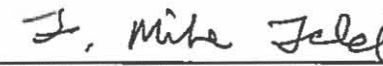
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO



Heidi M. Albritton, Chair



Lynn M. Padgett, Vice-Chair



F. Mike Fedel, Commissioner



Michelle Nauer, Clerk and Recorder

By: Linda Munson-Haley, Deputy Clerk of the Board

RESOLUTION # 2007-075

**RESOLUTION
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OURAY COUNTY**

Re: Sneffels Wilderness Expansion

WHEREAS, the Sneffels range of the San Juan Mountains in Ouray County is an area of extraordinary scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational value; and

WHEREAS, the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundaries do not protect in perpetuity adjacent public lands in the Sneffels range which are capable and deserving of permanent Wilderness designation; and

WHEREAS, a proposal to expand the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundaries to include these public lands has been presented to the Ouray County Board of Commissioners as represented in a map entitled "Whitehouse Expansion Of The Mount Sneffels Wilderness"; and

WHEREAS, visitors and residents of Ouray County today enjoy these public lands for hiking, camping, photography, mountain climbing, hunting, skiing, scenic enjoyment and other wilderness uses; and

WHEREAS, recreation and other uses of the public lands of Ouray County are a vital part of the local economy; and

WHEREAS, these public lands provide important mid-elevation habitat for game and non-game wildlife and help connect wildlife habitat in the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness Area to the west with habitat in the Big Blue Wilderness Area to the east; and

WHEREAS, these public lands include important watershed areas for domestic and agricultural water sources including Beaver Creek, the Town of Ridgway's only source of potable water; and

WHEREAS, preservation of these public lands as designated Wilderness would better protect their scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational values in perpetuity from the adverse effects of future development; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area does not include the Dallas Trail System so that mountain bikers can continue to enjoy this beautiful and challenging trail; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area likewise does not include any roads currently open to motorized use; and

WHEREAS, ranching is an important part of the history and economy of Ouray County and portions of the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area are currently used for livestock grazing; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area is already managed by the US Forest Service in substantial measure as wilderness; and

WHEREAS, the designation as wilderness of the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area will make this special place part of a system of places wild and free for the permanent good of all.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:

- That Congress enact legislation to designate the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area as permanent wilderness,
- That the legislation includes appropriate language to protect existing water rights including those of the Town of Ridgway, as well as reasonable motorized access to maintain such rights,
- That the legislation includes appropriate language to permit livestock grazing to continue in the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area as provided under current law, including reasonable motorized access to facilitate use of livestock grazing.

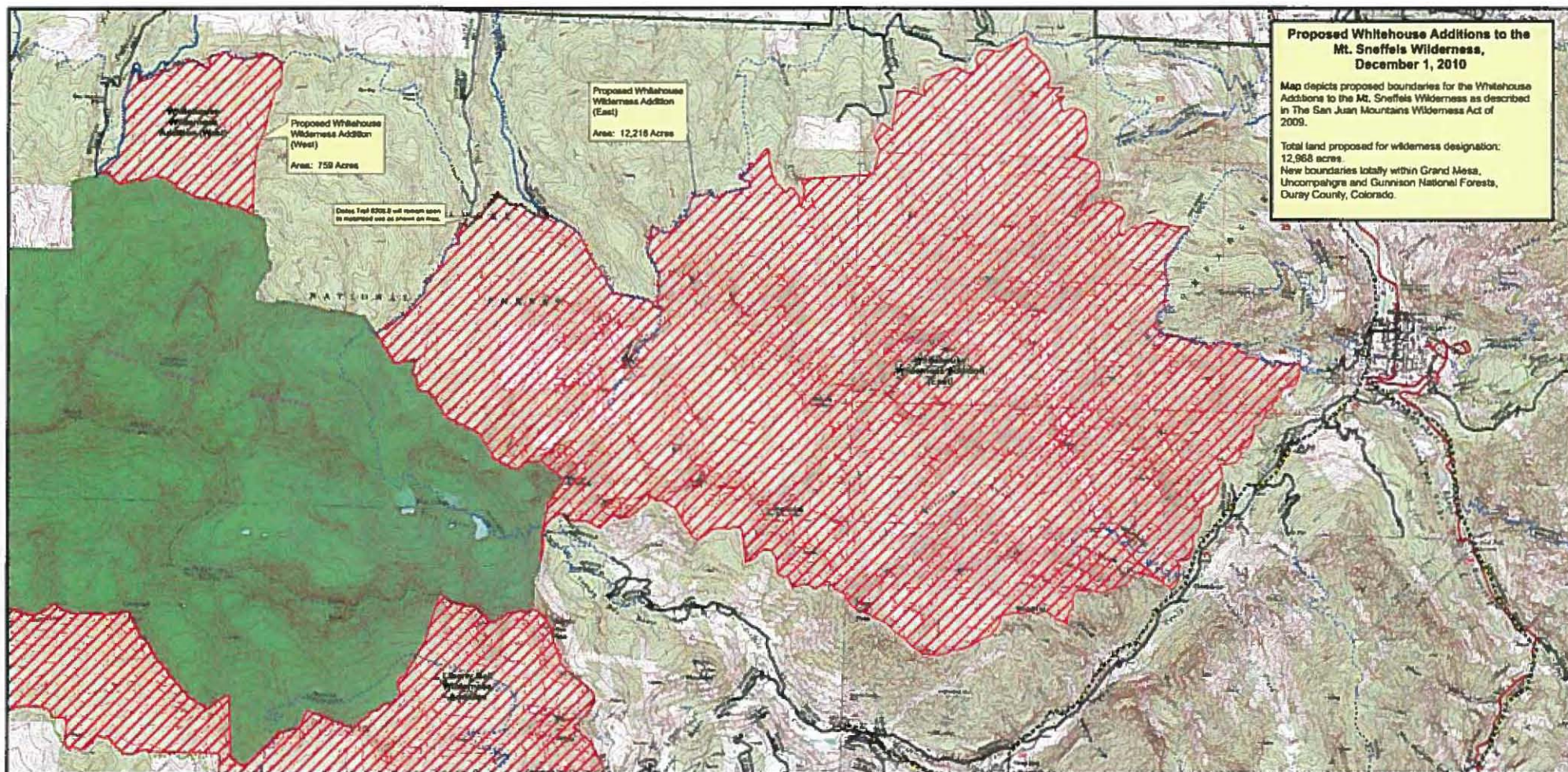
APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 5th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2007.



Michelle Nauer
Michelle Nauer, Clerk and Recorder
By: Linda Munson-Haley, Deputy Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO

Don Batchelder, Chair



References
Map prepared by the U.S. Forest Service, Region 2, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests Resource Information staff at the request of Senate Energy Committee Majority Staff.
Proposed wilderness, special management area and watershed protection area boundaries are general representations and do not represent legal boundary descriptions.
Boundary Source: Representative Salazar's staff, USFS staff.
Additional data sources: Forest roads and trails, utility corridors - USFS; Land ownership - USFS, BLM, State of Colorado, San Miguel County; Census-TIGER2000.
Map Scale is 1:24,000 (when printed at 34x22). Map Coordinates in NAD83, UTM Zone 13N.
Use Recreation Data, USFS Region 2, Automated Lands Program.

Disclaimer
The USDA Forest Service makes no warranty, expressed or implied regarding the data displayed on this map, and reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace this information without notification.

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Legend
Legislative Proposal
Proposed Wilderness

Current Land Status
National System of Public Lands (BLM)
National Forest
National Forest Wilderness
State
Colorado Division of Wildlife
City
Private
Forest Boundary

Existing Utility Corridors
Dispersal Ditches
ROADS
3 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES
4 - SUITABLE FOR PASSENGER CARS
4 - MODERATE DEGREE OF USER COMFORT
5 - HIGH DEGREE OF USER COMFORT
TRAILS
MOTORIZED
MOUNTAIN BIKE
NONMOTORIZED

Sheet 3 of 5
Map Creation Date: December 1, 2010

Proposed Whitehouse Additions to the Mt. Sneffels Wilderness, December 1, 2010

Legislative Map, The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act of 2009
At the request of Senate Energy Committee Majority Staff

4,825 acres in Sections 1-15, Township 43 North, Range 8 West;
194 acres in Sections 1, 12, Township 43 North, Range 9 West;
8,294 acres in Sections 21, 22, 28-38, Township 44 North, Range 8 West;
1,879 acres in Sections 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 35, 36, Township 44 North, Range 9 West;
23rd Precinct Madison, Duray County, Colorado



U.S. Forest Service - Rocky Mountain Region
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

U.S. Congressional District 3, Colorado

This map generally depicts the boundary of the proposed Whitehouse Additions to the Mt. Sneffels Wilderness as described in The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act of 2009. Total land proposed for wilderness designation shown on map is 12,978 acres. Copies of this map are available for public inspection in the Office of the Regional Forester, Rocky Mountain Region, Golden, Colorado.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

530 East Main Street
Aspen, Colorado 81611
Phone: (970) 920-5200
www.pitkincounty.com

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for the CORE Act and Legislation Withdrawing Thompson Divide from Future Oil and Gas Leasing

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

For the past ten years, Pitkin County Commissioners, on behalf of the constituents of the Pitkin County and diverse stakeholders, have recognized the cultural, environmental and economic values of the public lands in the Thompson Divide and have long sought legislation protecting the area. The Thompson Divide part of the CORE Act is the result of years of stakeholder work that included western slope counties, conservation organizations, outdoor recreation groups, extractive industries, ranching, agricultural and wildlife organizations. This collaborative process resulted in the consensus that became the foundation of these protections.

We support the CORE Act as it will protect public lands in Thompson Divide with a permanent withdrawal from availability for future oil and gas leasing while respecting valid rights of existing leaseholders and offering credits to leaseholders if they choose to not develop their leaseholds. We thank you, our legislators, for listening to our communities, local citizens, and people from across the country who have consistently requested legislation offering this protection. Successful passage of the CORE Act will ensure that Thompson Divide does not succumb to the exclusive benefit of one industry, but rather that the greatest amount of benefits of Thompson Divide are ensured for the largest number of users for current and future generations.

Steve Child
County Commissioner
Vice Chair

Patti Clapper
County Commissioner

Kelly McNicholas Kury
County Commissioner

Greg Poshman
County Commissioner
Chair

George Newman
County Commissioner

The outdoor economy is one of the top economic drivers for Colorado, bringing in \$26 billion and representing nearly 10% of the State's GDP. We offer our support for the CORE Act, which seeks to protect 400,000 acres of public lands, as it reflects community desires for common sense protections for Colorado's public lands and outdoor recreation that is so important to our local communities. In addition, the CORE Act has strong enabling legislative language that supports efforts in coal mine methane capture, a resource Pitkin County has long been supportive of and can be developed with minimal resource disruption to other uses of public lands. We learned that when communities collaborate and compromise through hard work, vigorous debate and meaningful discussion they have the ability to create durable protections rooted in vision and thought to future generations. Pitkin County requests Colorado's congressional delegation work together to pass this common-sense legislation that protects public lands critical to our local economy.

We look forward to continuing our work with each of you toward the passage of the CORE Act. Protecting some of the special areas in Pitkin County and across the state is an opportunity for both locals and visitors to continue to have access to these areas while still seeing the immense benefits protections will bring for recreation, ranching and sporting for future generations. For all Coloradans, these areas are the source of our clean air and water and the wellspring of our identity and history and in such, worthy of our steadfast commitment to protect.

We thank you for your leadership on this legislative package.

Sincerely,



Greg Poschman
Chair
Pitkin County Board of Commissioners

cc: Governor Jared Polis

Town of Crested Butte

P.O. Box 39 Crested Butte, Colorado 81224

-National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2008 Dozen Distinctive Destinations Award Recipient-

-A National Historic District-

Phone: (970) 349-5338
FAX: (970) 349-6626
www.townofcrestedbutte.com

February 19, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1449 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Neguse, and Representative Tipton,

The Town of Crested Butte, Colorado strongly supports the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act of 2019. We specifically support the provision in the legislation that permanently withdraws – subject to valid existing rights – lands in the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Area from all forms of (1) entry, appropriation, and disposal under the public land laws; (2) location, entry, and patent under mining laws; and (3) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws. Included in the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Area are federal lands near Crested Butte, including the iconic Kebler Pass landscape along County Road 12, lands near Ohio Pass, and lands adjacent to the Raggeds Wilderness and West Elk Wilderness. Conservation of this interconnected landscape is critical to the economic and environmental sustainability of Crested Butte, and we support its permanent protection through federal legislation.

Crested Butte has a history in mining, but now has a vibrant local economy based on recreation, ranching, and tourism. The public lands in Gunnison County that are part of the CORE Act support all three of these economic drivers. Mineral development in the withdrawal area, especially near Kebler Pass and County Road 12, Ohio Pass, and the Raggeds and West Elk Wilderness areas, is incompatible with our community's economic wellbeing and environmental values.

The withdrawal area includes the iconic aspen forests near Crested Butte that draw tourists every fall for leaf peeping. It also encompasses a significant portion of the West Elk Loop Scenic Byway, the

Town of Crested Butte

P.O. Box 39 Crested Butte, Colorado 81224

-National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2008 Dozen Distinctive Destinations Award Recipient-

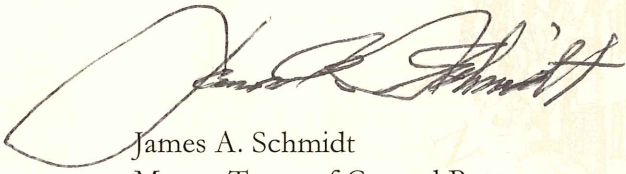
-A National Historic District-

Phone: (970) 349-5338
FAX: (970) 349-6626
www.townofcrestedbutte.com

proposed Carbondale to Crested Butte Trail, and those routes' viewsheds. The Town of Crested Butte is a partner in both the Byway and the Trail because they attract tourists to our town and surrounding communities. Hunting, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, and backcountry winter sports are popular recreation endeavors within the mineral withdrawal area. Wildlife also call this area home. Historic ranching stands to benefit from this legislation's permanent protection of public lands that support grazing. In addition, the mineral withdrawal area in Gunnison County is directly upstream from the farms, orchards, and vineyards of Delta County, an area that supplies much of the fresh, local produce for Crested Butte residents and businesses.

The CORE Act is good for Crested Butte, good for Gunnison County, and good for Colorado. By achieving a balance between energy development, conservation, and recreation, it will help sustain the quality of life we have developed in our community now and for future generations.

Sincerely,



James A. Schmidt
Mayor, Town of Crested Butte



TOWN OF CARBONDALE
511 COLORADO AVENUE
CARBONDALE, CO 81623

February 26, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for Legislation Withdrawing Thompson Divide from Future Oil and Gas Leasing

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

For a decade, the Town of Carbondale Trustees and the citizens of Carbondale have consistently supported conservation of public lands in the Thompson Divide. That support continues today.

In 2009, the Town of Carbondale resolved that community, environmental, and economic values in the Divide "deserve preservation and protection," and supported "efforts of the Thompson Divide Coalition to explore legislative initiatives and other opportunities to protect these special areas from energy development." See Exhibit 1.

In 2010, Trustees of the Town of Carbondale adopted Resolution No. 9 Series of 2010 reciting the unique existing values in the Thompson Divide, indicating that "[e]nergy development in this area would have a deleterious impact on the rural character, ranching heritage and agricultural heritage ... and would forever ruin the wild character and exceptional wildlife habitat it now offers." The resolution endorsed the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act and

supported "immediate introduction of the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act legislation to secure permanent protection of the Thompson Divide..." See Exhibit 2.

Also in 2010, the Mayor of Carbondale sent a letter to Rep. John Salazar reciting the Town's support of the Thompson Divide Coalition, reciting support for the aims of the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and requesting introduction of the Act "during this session in order to move this effort forward." See Exhibit 3.

In 2015, the Mayor of Carbondale joined leaders from other local communities in signing a letter to BLM reiterating "the need to conserve certain public lands in the Thompson Divide" and stating that: "our communities have long supported a legislative solution to address conflicts that exist in the Thompson Divide area." See Exhibit 4.

Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Joe Neguse recently introduced bills in both houses of Congress that respond to requests to permanently protect public lands in the Thompson Divide. The bills, commonly referred to as the Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy (CORE) Act, include provisions that would permanently withdraw the Thompson Divide from availability for future oil and gas leasing.

We support provisions of the CORE Act that will protect public lands in the Thompson Divide with a permanent withdrawal from availability for future leasing, and we thank our legislators for listening to our communities, local citizens, and people from across the country who have consistently requested legislation offering this protection.

We request that Colorado's congressional delegation work together to pass this common-sense legislation that protects public lands critical to our local economy, respects valid existing rights of leaseholders in the Thompson Divide Area, and includes language offering credits to any leaseholder that wants to get rid of leases within the withdrawal boundary.

Thank you for your continued efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Richardson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan Richardson
Mayor



City of Glenwood Springs
101 West 8th Street
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Tuesday, February 26, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for Legislation Withdrawing Thompson Divide from Future Oil and Gas Leasing

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

For a decade, the Glenwood Springs City Council and the citizens of Glenwood Springs have consistently supported conservation of public lands in the Thompson Divide. That support continues today.

In 2009, the Council resolved that community, environmental, and economic values in the Divide “deserve preservation and protection,” and supported “efforts of the Thompson Divide Coalition to explore legislative initiatives and other opportunities to protect these special areas from energy development.” See Exhibit 1.

In 2010, the City Council endorsed the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act as drafted by the Thompson Divide Coalition and requested that the bill be introduced to Congress “to ensure that the Thompson Divide gets the permanent protection it deserves.” See Exhibit 2.

In 2015, the Mayor of Glenwood Springs joined leaders from other local communities in signing a letter to BLM reiterating “the need to conserve certain public lands in the Thompson Divide” and stating

that: "our communities have long supported a legislative solution to address conflicts that exist in the Thompson Divide area." See Exhibit 3.

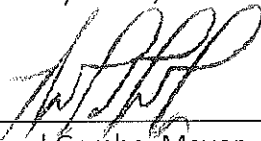
Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Joe Neguse recently introduced bills in both houses of Congress that respond to requests to permanently protect public lands in the Thompson Divide. The bills, commonly referred to as the Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy (CORE) Act, include provisions that would permanently withdraw the Thompson Divide from availability for future oil and gas leasing.

We support provisions of the CORE Act that will protect public lands in the Thompson Divide with a permanent withdrawal from availability for future leasing, and we thank our legislators for listening to our communities, local citizens, and people from across the country who have consistently requested legislation offering this protection.

We request that Colorado's congressional delegation work together to pass this common-sense legislation that protects public lands critical to our local economy, respects valid existing rights of leaseholders in the Thompson Divide Area, and includes language offering credits to any leaseholder that wants to get rid of leases within the withdrawal boundary.

Thank you for your continued efforts on this issue.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Gamba", written over a horizontal line.

Michael Gamba, Mayor
Glenwood Springs

Exhibit - 1

RESOLUTION 2009-15

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GLENWOOD SPRINGS, COLORADO, IN SUPPORT OF THE THOMPSON DIVIDE COALITION.

WHEREAS, the Thompson Divide Coalition is a broad-based coalition of local ranchers, farmers, hunters, anglers, recreationalists, water users, land owners, conservationists, and local governments formed to address mutual concerns regarding the existing oil and gas leases on federal lands in the Thompson, Fourmile, Muddy, and Clear Fork Creek watersheds, the headwaters of East Divide Creek, and the potential negative impacts on this rural area associated with their development; and

WHEREAS, ranching and farming in the Roaring Fork Valley not only makes important contributions to the economy of the area, but defines the rural character of the valley. These watersheds provide clean water to farms and ranches, as well as water for domestic use. In addition, these federal lands host grazing allotments for summer range for the majority of the areas' ranchers; and

WHEREAS, the Thompson Divide area is part of a 122,000 acre roadless landscape, which is the largest contiguous roadless area in the state. These federal lands provide important habitat for wildlife, and excellent hunting and angling opportunities. The area has been recognized by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) as high priority habitat for a variety of species. It is part of a critical big game migration corridor and provides key wildlife security for species such as deer, elk, bear, and lynx. The entire area is important elk calving habitat and summer range for big game. In addition, the Colorado River cutthroat trout (recognized as a Species of Special Concern by the CDOW) is found in two forks of Thompson Creek; and

WHEREAS, the area offers exceptional recreational opportunities for locals and visitors. It is regularly used by bikers, climbers, hikers, snowmobilers, and cross country and back country skiers. The recreational opportunities these special areas provide are an essential part of the high quality of life offered by the valley; and

WHEREAS, energy development in this area would have a deleterious effect on Glenwood Springs through increased heavy truck traffic, creating air quality, safety, and road and bridge impacts; all damaging our small town character. The areas' ranching/agricultural heritage and the exceptional wildlife habitat would be forever damaged. Furthermore, energy development in this rural and largely roadless area would create serious public environmental health and emergency management concerns; and

WHEREAS, although the Thompson Divide Coalition recognizes the need for energy development, it believes it is imperative that energy development occur only in appropriate places and that it proceed in a responsible manner. The Bureau of Land Management has approved 80 leases on this special landscape, half of which were let in roadless areas without surface stipulations after the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule was in effect.

Exhibit - 1

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GLENWOOD SPRINGS, COLORADO, THAT:

Section 1. The Thompson, Fourmile, Muddy, and Clear Fork Creek watersheds, the headwaters of East Divide Creek, as well as the local community, environmental, and economic values they support, deserve preservation and protection.

Section 2. Energy development on federal lands in these areas is inconsistent with such preservation and protection, and is indicative of a flawed and irresponsible approach to energy development.

Section 3. The City of Glenwood Springs supports the efforts of the Thompson Divide Coalition to explore legislative initiatives and other opportunities to protect these special areas from energy development.

INTRODUCED, READ AND PASSED THIS 16th DAY OF July,
2009.

CITY OF GLENWOOD SPRINGS, COLORADO



Bruce Christensen, Mayor

ATTEST:



Robln S. Unsworth, City Clerk



City of Glenwood Springs
Office of the Mayor

August 6, 2010

The Honorable John Salazar
1531 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Congressman Salazar:

We support the efforts of the Thompson Divide Coalition. The Coalition has now drafted a bill called the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act. We support the aims of that bill and request that you introduce the bill during this session in order to move this effort forward.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the residents of Colorado and for the protection of public lands. We look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure that the Thompson Divide gets the permanent protection it deserves.

Respectfully,
Glenwood Springs City Council

Bruce Christensen, Mayor

xc: TDC
Edward Stern, Staff Assistant
John Whitney, Regional Director
Richard Baca, Regional Director
Ronnie Carleton, Chief of Staff

Exhibit - 3

December 17, 2015

Ms. Ruth Welch
Colorado State Director
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

Re: Support for Proposed Action Within Draft EIS for Previously Issued Oil and Gas Leases in the White River National Forest

Dear Director Welch,

On behalf of our constituents, and in advance of more detailed comments from our respective jurisdictions, we write to provide input regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) ongoing environmental impact statement (EIS) process to examine 65 federal oil and gas leases in the White River National Forest.

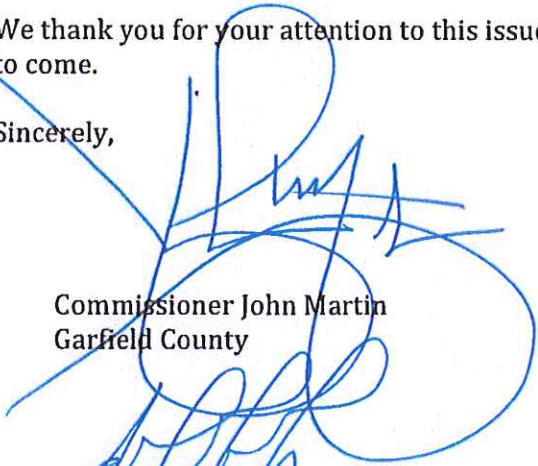
As you know, the outcome of this process will affect the long-term interests of a diverse group of communities, industries, and other stakeholders on the Western Slope. With this in mind we were pleased to see that BLM's Draft EIS contained a "proposed action" to specifically address the many differences that exist between 25 undeveloped leases in the Thompson Divide area and 40 other leases – some of which have already been developed – on the western end of the National Forest.

We appreciate that BLM's proposed action aims to balance the need for future development of public minerals in the Piceance Basin with the need to conserve certain public lands in the Thompson Divide area. We support this balanced approach and urge BLM to move forward without delay.

Finally, you should know that our communities have long supported a legislative solution to address the conflicts that exist in the Thompson Divide area. We remain hopeful that Congress will work together to address our communities' concerns. In lieu of congressional action, however, please know that we see BLM's ongoing EIS process as an important path toward resolving the longstanding issues presented by improperly issued leases in the Thompson Divide.

We thank you for your attention to this issue and look forward to working with you in the months to come.

Sincerely,



Commissioner John Martin
Garfield County




Mayor Mike Gamba
City of Glenwood Springs



Commissioner Steve Child

Commissioner Steve Child
Pitkin County



Mayor Stacey Bernot

Mayor Stacey Bernot
Town of Carbondale



Office of the Mayor
Sean Murphy, Mayor

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 19, 2019

Dear Senator Bennet:

The Town of Telluride appreciates the opportunity to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act). We truly value the years of leadership you have shown on protecting public lands in Colorado, and we commend you for introducing this visionary legislation alongside Congressman Neguse. The public lands of our state support this community's quality of life and our sustainable outdoor recreation-driven economies. We also believe that our clean air, clean water, and public health are directly linked to the protection of our public lands.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that we have long supported in the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, last introduced in the 2018 Congress. Protections for the San Juan Mountains have enjoyed remarkably consistent and broad support, including all three counties where the lands are located, five major local municipalities (including ours), well over 100 local businesses, and a wide array of affected stakeholders. These stakeholders include ranchers, sportsmen, private landowners, recreation groups, the area's only operating mining company, and our own Telluride ski resort. We believe that it is high time the 61,000 acres proposed in our area were permanently protected.

We also appreciate the additional components the CORE act includes, such as protections that balance conservation and recreation in the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act, the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and the Curecanti National Boundary Establishment Act. In the connected landscapes of the Southwest, each of these proposed protected areas uplifts and helps support the communities and wildlife that depend on the others.

The four elements of the CORE Act are all reflective of and accountable to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We are appreciative that these proposed designations were locally developed to address existing and future recreation, wildlife habitat, wildfire management, agricultural and water supply needs.

Millions of people visit Colorado each year, and our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. But we must have the vision to protect what is wilderness, create ongoing opportunities for sustainable recreation, and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe that the CORE Act strikes that balance.

We hope that Colorado's congressional delegation will prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,

Mayor Sean Murphy



Office of the Mayor
Sean Murphy, Mayor

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 19, 2019

Dear Senator Gardner,

The Town of Telluride appreciates the opportunity to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act). We value the leadership of the Colorado delegation to protect public lands in Colorado, and we ask that you join Senator Bennet and Congressman Neguse in their visionary effort to protect lands across Colorado. The public lands of our state are critical to this community's quality of life and our sustainable outdoor recreation-driven economies. We also believe that our clean air, clean water, and public health are directly linked to the protection of our public lands.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that we have long supported in the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, last introduced in the 2018 Congress. Protections for the San Juan Mountains have enjoyed remarkably consistent and broad support, including all three counties where the lands are located, five major local municipalities (including ours), well over 100 local businesses, and a wide array of affected stakeholders. These stakeholders include ranchers, sportsmen, private landowners, recreation groups, the area's only operating mining company, and our own Telluride ski resort. We believe that it is high time the 61,000 acres proposed in our area were permanently protected.

We also appreciate the additional components the CORE act includes, such as protections that balance conservation and recreation in the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act, the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and the Curecanti National Boundary Establishment Act. In the connected landscapes of the Southwest, each of these proposed protected areas uplifts and helps support the communities and wildlife that depend on the others.

The four elements of the CORE Act are all reflective of and accountable to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We are appreciative that these proposed designations were locally developed to address existing and future recreation, wildlife habitat, wildfire management, agricultural and water supply needs.

Millions of people visit Colorado each year, and our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. But we must have the vision to protect what is wilderness, create ongoing opportunities for sustainable recreation, and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe that the CORE Act strikes that balance.

We hope that Colorado's congressional delegation will prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress. The Town of Telluride asks that you do whatever you can to move this legislation forward. Our citizens are hungry to see this sort of protection. Please do not hesitate to reach out and let us know how we can work with you to see the CORE Act through.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sean" and last name "Murphy" clearly distinguishable.

Mayor Sean Murphy



Office of the Mayor
Sean Murphy, Mayor

Joe Neguse
2503 Walnut Street, Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80302

March 19, 2019

Dear Congressman Neguse,

The Town of Telluride appreciates the opportunity to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act). We value the leadership of the Colorado delegation to protect public lands in Colorado. Thank you for joining Senator Bennet in introducing this visionary legislation. The public lands of our state support this community's quality of life and our sustainable outdoor recreation-driven economies. We also believe that our clean air, clean water, and public health are directly linked to the protection of our public lands.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that we have long supported in the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, last introduced in the 2018 Congress. Protections for the San Juan Mountains have enjoyed remarkably consistent and broad support, including all three counties where the lands are located, five major local municipalities (including ours), well over 100 local businesses, and a wide array of affected stakeholders. These stakeholders include ranchers, sportsmen, private landowners, recreation groups, the area's only operating mining company, and our own Telluride ski resort. We believe that it is high time the 61,000 acres proposed in our area were permanently protected.

We also appreciate the additional components the CORE act includes, such as protections that balance conservation and recreation in the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act, the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and the Curecanti National Boundary Establishment Act. In the connected landscapes of the Southwest, each of these proposed protected areas uplifts and helps support the communities and wildlife that depend on the others.

The four elements of the CORE Act are all reflective of and accountable to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We are appreciative that these proposed designations were locally developed to address existing and future recreation, wildlife habitat, wildfire management, agricultural and water supply needs.

Millions of people visit Colorado each year, and our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. But we must have the vision to protect what is wilderness, create ongoing opportunities for sustainable recreation, and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe that the CORE Act strikes that balance. Thank you for standing up for public lands throughout Colorado.

We hope that Colorado's congressional delegation will prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,

Mayor Sean Murphy



Office of the Mayor
Sean Murphy, Mayor

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 19, 2019

Dear Congressman Tipton,

The Town of Telluride appreciates the opportunity to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act). We value the leadership of the Colorado delegation to protect public lands in Colorado, and we ask that you join Senator Bennet and Congressman Neguse in their visionary effort to protect lands across Colorado. The public lands of our state are critical to this community's quality of life and our sustainable outdoor recreation-driven economies. We also believe that our clean air, clean water, and public health are directly linked to the protection of our public lands.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that we have long supported in the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, last introduced in the 2018 Congress. Protections for the San Juan Mountains have enjoyed remarkably consistent and broad support, including all three counties where the lands are located, five major local municipalities (including ours), well over 100 local businesses, and a wide array of affected stakeholders. These stakeholders include ranchers, sportsmen, private landowners, recreation groups, the area's only operating mining company, and our own Telluride ski resort. We believe that it is high time the 61,000 acres proposed in our area were permanently protected.

We also appreciate the additional components the CORE act includes, such as protections that balance conservation and recreation in the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act, the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and the Curecanti National Boundary Establishment Act. In the connected landscapes of the Southwest, each of these proposed protected areas uplifts and helps support the communities and wildlife that depend on the others.

The four elements of the CORE Act are all reflective of and accountable to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We are appreciative that these proposed designations were locally developed to address existing and future recreation, wildlife habitat, wildfire management, agricultural and water supply needs.

Millions of people visit Colorado each year, and our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. But we must have the vision to protect what is wilderness, create ongoing opportunities for sustainable recreation, and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe that the CORE Act strikes that balance.

We hope that Colorado's congressional delegation will prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress. The Town of Telluride asks that you do whatever you can to move this legislation forward. Our citizens are hungry to see this sort of protection. Please do not hesitate to reach out and let us know how we can work with you to see the CORE Act through.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sean" and last name "Murphy" clearly legible.

Mayor Sean Murphy

March 26, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for Legislation Withdrawing Thompson Divide from Future Oil and Gas Leasing

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

For nearly a decade, the Town of Basalt has supported conservation of public lands in the Thompson Divide. That support continues today.

In 2010 the Town of Basalt sent a letter to Rep. John Salazar stating the Town's support for the Thompson Divide Coalition, the aims of the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and requesting introduction of the Act "during this session in order to move this effort forward." See Exhibit 1.

In 2012 the Town of Basalt wrote to Sen. Michael Bennet requesting introduction of the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act because of concern that the "area's clean water, rural and agricultural heritage, and recreational and sporting activities could be negatively impacted by oil and gas development. " They recognized that the Thompson Divide area, "defined by abundant wildlife and wildlife habitat; essential watersheds, and historic grazing rights for local ranches...provide significant economic, agricultural, and social values to this small region of the state." See Exhibit 2

Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Joe Neguse recently introduced bills in both houses of Congress that respond to requests to permanently protect public lands in the Thompson Divide. The bills, commonly referred to as the Colorado Outdoor Recreation

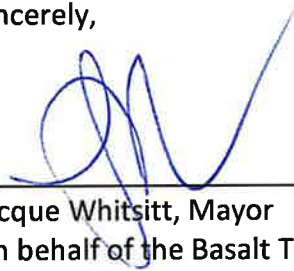
& Economy (CORE) Act, include provisions that would permanently withdraw the Thompson Divide from availability for future oil and gas leasing.

We support provisions of the CORE Act that will protect public lands in the Thompson Divide with a permanent withdrawal from availability for future leasing, and we thank our legislators for listening to our communities, local citizens, and people from across the country who have consistently requested legislation offering this protection.

We request that Colorado's congressional delegation work together to pass this common-sense legislation that protects public lands critical to our local economy, respects valid existing rights of leaseholders in the Thompson Divide Area, and includes offers credits to any leaseholder wishing to get rid of leases within the withdrawal boundary.

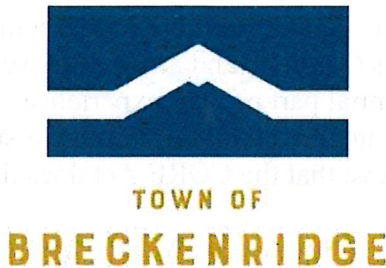
Thank you for your continued efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jacquie Whitsitt', is written over a horizontal line.

Jacquie Whitsitt, Mayor
On behalf of the Basalt Town Council

Cc: Thompson Divide Coalition



March 27, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, and Representative Neguse:

I am writing to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act). We appreciate the leadership of the Colorado delegation to protect public lands in Colorado, and in particular the leadership of Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Joe Neguse for introducing this legislation. Our public lands support the Town of Breckenridge's quality of life and support our sustainable outdoor recreation-driven economies. We are proud of our efforts to provide the highest quality of life for our residents, a sustainable environment, and unsurpassed recreational experiences for our visitors. The CORE act will complement and advance those efforts.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that balance conservation and outdoor recreation that we have long supported in the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness and Camp Hale Legacy Act, which was introduced in the last Congress and was collaboratively developed over many years. The bill brings a suite of designations to protect the Tenmile Range immediately adjacent to our town, as well as other nearby areas for their wilderness, watershed, wildlife, recreation, scenic, and historic values.

The four elements of the CORE Act are all reflective of and accountable to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We are appreciative that these proposed designations were locally-developed to address existing and future recreation, wildlife habitat, wildfire management, agricultural and water supply needs.

For our residents, our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. For our visitors from across Colorado and around the world, they are a critical reason to come to Breckenridge and an essential part of their experience. We must have the vision to protect wilderness, protect and create quality opportunities for sustainable recreation, and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe that the CORE Act does that, and we are proud to support it.

We hope that Colorado's congressional delegation will prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,



Mayor Eric Mamula
Town of Breckenridge



March 29, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Re: The CORE Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

The Town of Ophir appreciates the opportunity to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. We truly value the years of leadership you have shown in protecting public lands in Colorado, and we commend you for introducing this visionary legislation alongside Representative Neguse. Ophir's identity and way of life are built upon the wildlands that surround us. We also believe that our clean air, clean water and public health are directly linked to the protection of our public lands.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that we have long supported in the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, last introduced in the 115th Congress. Protections for the San Juan Mountains have enjoyed remarkably consistent and broad support, including all three counties where the lands are located, five major local municipalities (including ours), and well over 100 local businesses and a wide array

of affected stakeholders. These stakeholders include ranchers, sportsmen, private landowners, recreation groups, the Telluride ski resort and the area's only operating mining company.

The Town of Ophir is a small community of 165 full time residents, many of which are families, sitting on the boundary of US Forest Lands, immediately adjacent to the proposed Sheep Mountain Special Management Area. Visitors and residents alike are drawn to this valley every season to enjoy quiet use activities, such as hiking, mountain biking, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing. We have serious safety and quality of life concerns about increased use of motorized over snow use in our valley and in the Ophir Pass corridor. We have also long urged the Forest Service to enforce existing restrictions on winter motorized use.

Some of our specific concerns with the potential for winter motorized use in the area include:

Increased Avalanche Hazard: Ophir is a well-established backcountry ski and snowshoe destination that is known for large and dangerous avalanches. In fact, the month of March this year the Town was isolated for 6 days due to multiple natural avalanches. Snowmobilers and motorized snow bikes traveling through significant avalanche terrain not only put themselves at risk, they also can endanger other backcountry users and parts of our town below by triggering avalanches. When avalanches do occur this is a challenge to emergency services that need to be provided to backcountry users and the residents of Ophir.

Existing restrictions are not being respected nor enforced: Residents regularly report seeing snowmobile tracks in areas south of the Ophir Pass Road, which is "closed" to snowmobile traffic, per the Forest Service's 2002 Winter Travel Management Plan. Additionally, snowmobile tracks have been seen in Spring Gulch, a very large avalanche path between the two residential areas of Ophir. Large avalanches in this gulch have historically crossed the Ophir road and done significant damage to properties. In 2004, an avalanche in Spring Gulch destroyed electricity utility poles, causing nearly a weeklong power outage in Telluride. Because the Forest Service has not monitored or enforced snowmobile travel, snowmobiles are traveling in areas prohibited to them, posing risks to all below.

Noise Pollution: Residents are very concerned about noise pollution in the Ophir Valley. Snowmobiles are very loud when they are running full throttle and can be heard throughout the enclosed valley.

Lynx Habitat Protection: The Ophir valley is vital lynx habitat. Lynx are a federally listed "threatened" species that are in critical need of habitat protection. Lynx in the Ophir valley are adapted to prey on snowshoe hare. When snow in lynx habitat is compacted by snowmobiles, coyotes can more easily hunt in those areas, creating competition for the lynx.

The Record of Decision in the Southern Rockies Lynx Management Direction published by the US Forest Service in 2008 includes the following guidelines: “Designated over-the-snow routes or play areas should not expand outside of the baseline areas of consistent snow compaction, unless it serves to consolidate use and improve lynx habitat” (p.14).

Forest Service lynx conservation policies were updated in the 2013 publication Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy 3rd Edition (2013 LCAS). The 2013 LCAS includes the following findings and guidelines: “It has been suggested that crusting or compaction of snow may reduce the competitive advantage that lynx have in soft snow because of their long legs and low foot loadings” (2013 LCAS P-26).

For all the reasons above, the Ophir Valley would greatly benefit if the area were permanently closed to over-the-snow motorized recreational use. The San Juan Mountain Wilderness Act and the CORE Act provide a valuable framework for the management of the Sheep Mountain Special Management Area, and the Town of Ophir strongly supports its passage. There are many areas on public lands that can and should be enjoyed by motorized recreationists. But the Sheep Mountain Special Management Area is an area that simply is not appropriate for those uses. While this bill does not go nearly as far as we would like with restricting motorized use in critical areas near our Town, we strongly support the bill because it aligns with our community’s values and vision for the future.

Millions of people visit Colorado each year and our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. But we must have the vision to protect certain lands, create ongoing opportunities for sustainable recreation and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe that the CORE Act strikes that balance.

We hope that Colorado’s congressional delegation will prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Corinne Platt
Mayor, Ophir, Colorado
970-728-4695
mayor@town-ophir.co.gov



TOWN HALL PO Box 10 | 201 N. Railroad Street | Ridgway, Colorado 81432 | 970.626.5308 | www.town.ridgway.co.us

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russel Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russel Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1449 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Neguse and Representative Tipton,

The Town of Ridgway, Colorado strongly supports the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act). We appreciate the leadership of the Colorado delegation to protect public lands in Colorado, and in particular the leadership of Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Joe Neguse for introducing this legislation in the 116th Congress. Our public lands support our communities' quality of life and support our sustainable outdoor recreation-driven economies. We also value the protection of wildlife corridors, watersheds, dark skies, and air quality resulting from the proposed designations.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that balance conservation and recreation that we have long supported in the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act. Protections for the San Juan Mountains have enjoyed remarkably consistent and broad support over the past decade, including all three counties where the lands are located, five major local municipalities, over 100 local businesses, and a wide array of affected stakeholders. These stakeholders include ranchers, sportsmen, private landowners, recreation groups, the area's only operating mining company, and the region's biggest ski resort. The bill was most recently introduced by Senator Michael Bennet in April 2018 (S. 2721) and has been passed by both the House Natural Resources Committee (Fall 2010) and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Fall 2013). Most recently, a Senate hearing was held on the bill in August of 2018.

Now that the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act is integral to the more comprehensive CORE Act, we continue our support for this new legislation with our full endorsement of the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness and Camp Hale Legacy Act which, coupled with conservation and recreation benefits, creates the first-ever National Historic Landscape to honor the Army's 10th Mountain Division, whose soldiers trained for World War II combat in this rugged landscapes and who went on to found the modern ski industry that is essential to our state's economy.

We also applaud the foresight of Senator Bennet and Representative Neguse in recognizing the importance of mineral withdrawals on Thompson Divide and in Naturita Canyon. Protection from future oil, gas and



TOWN HALL PO Box 10 | 201 N. Railroad Street | Ridgway, Colorado 81432 | 970.626.5308 | www.town.ridgway.co.us

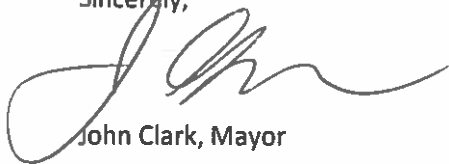
mining operations while preserving existing uses in these areas is vital to long term economic prosperity and ecological integrity and resiliency.

The four elements of the CORE Act (including the clarification of Curecanti National Recreation Area's continued management by the National Park Service) are all reflective of and accountable to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We are appreciative that these proposed designations were each locally developed to address existing and future recreation, wildlife habitat, wildfire management, agricultural and water supply needs.

Millions of people visit the central mountains and western slope of Colorado each year, and our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. Amidst growing pressure on our public lands, we applaud the vision of the bill's sponsors to protect pristine landscapes and awe-inspiring scenery, create ongoing opportunities for sustainable recreation, and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe the CORE Act strikes a balance that benefits human populations and ecological resources alike.

We urge Colorado's congressional delegation to prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,



John Clark, Mayor



March 15, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Bennet and Representative Neguse,

Congratulations on the recent introduction of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. (S. 241 & H.R. 823) The legislation combines several priority efforts to conserve some of Colorado's most exemplary public lands: the Continental Divide, Camp Hale, Thompson Divide, and the San Juan Mountains, as well as belatedly authorize Curecanti National Recreation Area.

Conservation Colorado strongly supports the CORE Act, which balances conservation values with providing opportunities for sustainable recreation. Public lands are the critical infrastructure for our state's \$62.5 billion outdoor recreation economy, plus they are essential to conserving wildlife, watersheds and the scenery that have made Colorado such an iconic state.

We look forward to continuing to partner with your office in building support for this legislation and assisting in advancing it through Congress by continuing to educate and engage the public in the effort. We appreciate the work that your staff have put into this bill already. Together we can work towards realizing a visionary public lands legacy to pass on to our children.

Thank you again for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Kelly Nordini
Executive Director



Support the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (H.R. 823/S. 241)

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and its 1.3 million members and supporters nationwide, including our nearly eleven thousand members throughout Colorado, I write to express strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act (H.R. 823/S. 241).

NPCA has been a leader in national park protection for 100 years. In conjunction with 25 field offices across the country, two of which are in Denver and Grand Junction, Colorado, we work to protect and preserve our nation's most iconic and inspirational places for present and future generations. Our members care deeply about our nation's most treasured natural areas and consider public lands protection a nonpartisan issue.

Colorado is known for its culturally-rich and inspirational places, and for its residents who will fight to protect and enhance these places. NPCA applauds Congressman Neguse and Senator Bennet for introducing this legislation which will protect 400,000 acres of public lands in Colorado, including providing a long-overdue boundary designation for the Curecanti National Recreation Area (CURE), one of Colorado's thirteen national park units.

Although CURE was created in 1965, it was never afforded enabling legislation by Congress, and therefore its boundary was never designated. This administrative deficiency seems minor, but it has limited the National Park Service's ability to efficiently manage the area. The CORE Act fixes this by providing an appropriate boundary through transfer or exchange of land with the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

While conserving special places is a priority, it cannot be accomplished without listening to, understanding and working with communities in the region, and creating authentic partnerships at the local level. The CORE Act reflects this approach. Its boundary adjustment for CURE is the result of a years-long extensive public planning process and will allow the National Park Service to work with landowners to enhance the long-term conservation of natural, recreational, and scenic resources within the unit. The CORE Act is also a response to the interests of nearly one million visitors who travel to the area to fish, hike, and recreate, and to the local gateway economies that depend upon this visitation and enhancement of its recreational opportunities. Economic figures for 2017 indicate visitor spending in CURE's local communities was over \$44 million, supporting 550 private sector jobs.

NPCA encourages swift passage of the CORE Act (H.R. 823/ S. 241). Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Tracy Coppola
Colorado Program Manager

Colorado Regional
Office 1855 Gaylord
Street
Suite 504
Denver, CO 80206
P 303.947.8013 | tcoppola@npca.org

NPCA.org



The Conservation Alliance

Outdoor Business Giving Back to the Outdoors

Senator Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Bennet and Congressman Neguse,

On behalf of The Conservation Alliance board and membership, we thank you for your work to protect Colorado's iconic public lands and waterways. Please accept our formal endorsement of the Colorado Recreation and Economy Act (S.241 / H.R.823). The Conservation Alliance is the only coalition of businesses that funds and partners with grassroots conservation organizations working to protect North America's wild places for their recreation and habitat values. For years, we have funded and advocated for the protection of components of this legislation. The Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act is the most significant and broadly supported effort to protect Colorado's wild places in a generation.

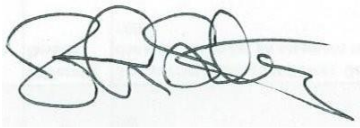
Over the last decade, coordination and compromise amongst businesses, recreation groups, sportsmen, and conservationists have positioned the CORE Act to be both politically viable and widely supported. This well-vetted, comprehensive plan to protect Colorado's wild places should serve as a model for other Western states to follow. The CORE Act secures permanent protection for 400,000 acres of public land across the state by combining and improving four previously introduced bills:

- **The Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act:** Protects 100,000 acres of wilderness, recreation, and conservation areas in the White River National Forest along Colorado's Continental Divide and designates the first ever National Historic Landscape around Camp Hale to preserve and promote the 10th Mountain Division's storied legacy.
- **The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act:** Protects 61,000 acres of public land in Southwest Colorado's San Juan Mountains.
- **Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act:** Withdraws approximately 200,000 acres of the Thompson Divide from future oil and gas development.
- **Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Act:** Establishes the boundary for the Curecanti National Recreation Area so the National Park Service can effectively manage the area and expand public fishing access.

The CORE Act protects important wildlife habitat and offers recreationists of all kinds an unmatched opportunity for adventure. Skiers, mountaineers, backpackers, anglers, wildlife viewers, climbers and many others from across the country flock to Colorado seeking adventure in the San Juan Mountain backcountry and the White River National Forest. These outdoor adventure seekers—and the outdoor-inspired brands who employ half a million Coloradans—sustain Colorado’s deep outdoor culture, and are the driving force behind the state’s \$62.5 billion outdoor recreation economyⁱ. Protecting places like Camp Hale, Mt. Sneffels, and the Thompson Divide is good for Colorado’s outdoor recreation economy.

The CORE Act demonstrates that protected public lands are our common ground. It strengthens a growing recreation-based economy, and it protects important recreation assets and wildlife habitat for future generations. We look forward to working with you to pass the CORE Act during the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Sterling", with a stylized, flowing script.

John Sterling
Executive Director, The Conservation Alliance

ⁱ https://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Trails/SCORP/2017EconomicContributions_SCORP.pdf



April 1, 2019

Dear Colorado Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of Colorado Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (COBHA), the fastest growing organization that represents sportsmen and women in North America, we write to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act, S. 241/H.R. 823) and would like to thank Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO) for introducing this legislation. The CORE Act provides important habitat protections that will have long term benefits for wildlife.

Contained within the landscapes highlighted in the CORE Act are headwaters, migration corridors, and ranges critical to the health of species including Colorado River cutthroat trout, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, desert bighorn sheep and many other species. The future of our hunting and fishing traditions and the North American Model of Wildlife Management depend on our ability to conserve quality habitat and to address the needs of wildlife in the face of dynamic challenges with increasing complexities. This bill does that, and as such, is uniquely important to hunters and anglers.

Title I: Continental Divide

The Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act provides a range of protections that will benefit wildlife. Most notable are the two new Wildlife Conservation Areas (WCAs) that the CORE Act would establish in Porcupine Gulch and in Williams Fork. The new WCAs would eliminate habitat fragmentation that is most evident along major roadways that intersect migration routes. In protecting a major migration corridor along I70, the Porcupine Gulch WCA plays an important role in ensuring a safe crossing point and the long-term health of many wildlife species. The expanded Wilderness protections in this bill would provide equally important benefits because of the important habitat values these landscapes hold for wildlife. Additionally, the Tenmile Range Recreation Management Area (RMA) would address inaccessible public land access issues for hunters and anglers. The loss of access is often cited as the no. one reason for hunter and angler decline. The CORE Act would protect recreational access in critical habitat areas in Colorado and secure the future of our hunter and fishing heritage.

Title II: San Juan Mountains

The CORE Act would preserve 2.5 miles of Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat and 17 total river miles. This is significant to the Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, which only occupy 10 percent of their historic range. Protections for wildlife migration corridors for elk, deer and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep would also be implemented to safeguard world-class hunting and fishing opportunities and conserve a number of struggling and iconic wildlife species in this region from bighorns to Colorado River cutthroat to Gunnison sage-grouse.

Title III: Thompson Divide



Habitat fragmentation is an important issue facing wildlife and the CORE Act would help ensure that important habitat remains intact. Under Title III, 200,000 acres of public land would be protected from future oil and gas exploration and safeguarding outdoor recreation opportunities.

Title IV: Curecanti National Recreation Area

As noted previously, access is a priority concern for hunters and anglers. Expanding public fishing access was a promise made to anglers long ago and this legislation ensures that certainty will be achieved for anglers visiting these waters and further establishing Gunnison County as one of the premier fishing destinations in Colorado.

In 2017, hunters, anglers, and wildlife viewers contributed \$5.1 billion to Colorado's economic revenue. Residents of the third congressional district spend nearly \$2.2 billion on recreation annually. The landscapes contained within the CORE Act have significant habitat values important to wildlife, hunters and anglers, and our economy. Colorado Backcountry Hunters & Anglers proudly backs the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act and we hope that you will prioritize its passage during the 116th Congress.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Lien
Chair
Colorado Chapter Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
E: dlien442@gmail.com

Don Holmstrom
Co-Chair
Colorado Chapter Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
E: donho2@comcast.net

Cc: House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Chairwoman Debra Haaland (D-NM) and Ranking Member Don Young (R-AK)





P.O. BOX 1442
CARBONDALE, CO 81623

TEL (970) 963-3977
FAX (970) 963-8447

www.wildernessworkshop.org
info@wildernessworkshop.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KARIN TEAGUE

President

ALLYN HARVEY

Vice President

CHARLES HOPTON

Co-Treasurer

PETER LOORAM

Co-Treasurer

LINDSAY GURLEY

Secretary

DENALI BARRON

MARY DOMINICK

SUE EDELSTEIN

CICI FOX

FELICITY HUFFMAN

MICHAEL MCVOY

ARON RALSTON

JILL SOFFER

MICHAEL STRANAHAN

PETER VAN DOMELEN

ANDY WIESSNER

TED ZUKOSKI

FOUNDERS

JOY CAUDILL

DOTTIE FOX*

CONNIE HARVEY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WILL ROUSH

**Deceased*

March 28, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Wilderness Workshop's Support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

I write to add Wilderness Workshop (WW) to the extensive list of local governments, businesses and organizations supporting the *Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act*. WW is the conservation watchdog for nearly 4 million acres of public lands in western Colorado, on the White River National Forest (WRNF) and adjacent public lands. The WRNF is the most visited national forest in the nation, and as such, the area bears the burden of many demands on its resources. WW supports the CORE Act, because it would protect public lands in Colorado that our members and supporters care about, including those in the WRNF.

Specifically, and importantly to us, the CORE Act withdraws more than 200,000 acres of land in the Thompson Divide outside of Carbondale, Colorado from future oil and gas leasing, and expands wilderness and other special management designations for nearly 100,000 acres of land along the Continental Divide in Summit and Eagle Counties.

WW has worked with local communities and diverse stakeholders to protect both of the areas mentioned above for over a decade. Working together with these communities and our elected officials, we have supported previously introduced legislation to protect these areas, and we gladly support their inclusion in the CORE Act. By permanently protecting over 400,000 acres of public lands in Colorado, the CORE Act unites four iconic Colorado landscapes into a single bill. Protection for each landscape hosts a wide diversity of constituency support that includes local counties and municipalities, businesses, ranchers, recreation and sportsmen groups, and conservationists.

The landscapes protected under the CORE Act have all been previously proposed for protection through the following bills:

1. Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act
2. The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act
3. Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act
4. Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Actse:

The Thompson Divide spans dozens of watersheds and provides domestic and agricultural water in the Crystal, Roaring Fork, and Colorado River valleys, and supports 8,000 acres of cropland in the North Fork Valley, one of the most productive organic farming regions in the nation. Our region's success in producing high-quality food is due to access to these public lands. Ranchers, farmers, local governments and recreationalists recognize the tremendous value the Divide holds for our economy and livelihoods. Without maintaining the healthy and vibrant natural resources of the area, the economy that has so long sustained area businesses could be in jeopardy.

Local governments, ranchers and recreation groups have supported permanent protection of the Divide for over a decade, because oil and gas development in the area is not compatible with the local agricultural and recreational economy. There are appropriate places for energy development and there are inappropriate places to develop. Due to the already vibrant outdoor and agricultural-based economic structure in the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide, energy development there is simply not appropriate. Language in the CORE Act protects valid existing rights of the current leaseholders in the area and includes an additional option for them to trade-in their existing leases for what they have spent on them to date. This represents a well vetted and balanced approach, and ensures meaningful protection of Thompson Divide.

Similarly, the Continental Divide provides some of the best landscapes in the Central Rocky Mountains to hike, camp, ski, kayak, raft, hunt, fish, mountain bike, horseback ride, ATV, and snowmobile. The areas within the Continental Divide proposal are located in the WRNF, which draws more than 12 million visitors a year. These visitors spend their money at local tourism and outdoor recreation businesses. Outdoor recreation is critical to Colorado's economy. It generates \$28 billion in consumer spending and is responsible for 229,000 jobs that pay \$9.7 billion in salaries and wages.

Also, historically, businesses have chosen to locate in beautiful, scenic places, like Colorado. In fact, total employment in counties with protected wilderness grew 65 percent faster than places that are not near protected public lands.

I would like to reiterate Wilderness Workshop's support for the CORE Act, which is the most significant opportunity we have to permanently protect the Thompson Divide and the Continental Divide in over a decade. We look forward to working with your office and stakeholders to secure passage of this commonsense legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Roush". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Will Roush | Executive Director
Wilderness Workshop



March 26, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Roaring Fork Audubon Society Support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

Roaring Fork Audubon Society is writing in Support of the CORE Act - especially including the area known as Thompson Divide, which withdraws approximately 200,000 acres from future oil and gas development, while preserving existing private property rights for leaseholders and landowners. Importantly, the Thompson Divide portion of the bill also creates a program to lease excess methane from nearby coal mines, supporting the local economy and addressing climate change.

Thompson Divide is a landscape characterized by a mosaic of ecosystems, each of which provide important wildlife values and ecosystem functions. Taken together, this mosaic of ecosystems provides values far greater than the sum of ecosystems, resulting in emergent properties that provide both essential human and wildlife services.

The undeveloped ecosystems of Thompson Divide provide humans with clean water and air, and wildlife with essential nesting and foraging habitat. Wetland habitats in the northern area of the Divide provide breeding and foraging sites for the state's Endangered Boreal Toad (*Bufo boreas*). Ancient wetlands, called fens, occur in the higher elevations sites on the Divide. Because fens take thousands of years to develop, they are categorized by the USFS as an irreplaceable resource. Activities that disturb surface and groundwater flow to the fens result in degradation and loss of wetland function in these rare communities. Old growth spruce and fir forests in Thompson Divide provide rare and essential hunting and nesting habitat for the USFS sensitive bird species, Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*). Northern Goshawk, another USFS sensitive bird species, also nest in both conifer and aspen forests of the Divide. Goshawks require large blocks of unfragmented forest for nesting and hunting and declines in Goshawk populations are attributed to activities that fragment forests.



Habitat fragmentation, due to the type of road development that typically occurs with oil and gas development, divides large blocks of land into smaller portions, and degrades the integrity and function of natural ecosystems that characterize this landscape. Ecosystem functions, such as water cleansing and storage, are degraded by fragmentation when soil and surface and shallow groundwater flow are altered - thereby diminishing these services that ecosystems provide to both humans and wildlife.

Currently the tapestry of ecosystems that characterize the Thompson Divide provide services that help maintain both human and wildlife communities. Essential to the maintenance and long-term sustainability of these ecosystems is the maintenance of the connections and processes, such as water filtration and storage, pollination, and soil building, which enable system functions and sustainable communities. Oil and gas development in Thompson Divide will erode these connections and consequently the sustainability of human and wildlife communities.

Roaring Fork Audubon Society supports the CORE Act, which includes a permanent mineral withdrawal in the Thompson Divide and will protect the natural resources upon which both humans and wildlife depend.

For Nature upon which humans depend,

Mary Harris
Chair, Roaring Fork Audubon Society



**SIERRA
CLUB**

Roaring Fork Group, Colorado Chapter
Sierra Club

March 26, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Roaring Fork Group, Colorado Chapter of the Sierra Club Support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

I am writing to add the voice of Roaring Fork Group of the Colorado Chapter of the Sierra Club, to those expressing support for the *Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act*. Sierra Club's mission is "to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; and to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environments." We support the CORE Act, because it protects so many of the public lands in Colorado that we care about, most importantly, the Thompson Divide outside of Carbondale, CO – for which more than 200,000 acres of public land would be permanently withdrawn from future oil and gas leasing.

By permanently protecting over 400,000 acres of public lands in Colorado, the CORE Act unites four iconic Colorado landscapes into a single bill. Protection for each landscape hosts a wide diversity of constituency support that includes local counties and municipalities, businesses, recreation and sportsmen groups, and conservationists.

The landscapes protected under the CORE Act have all been previously proposed for protection through the following bills:

1. Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act
2. The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act
3. Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act
4. Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Act:

In particular, the Thompson Divide area is critically important to sportsmen in Colorado and across the nation. The hunting units that lie within the Divide are some of the most hunted units in Colorado, and generated nearly 20,000 big game license sales in 2012. Hunters are also able to purchase unlimited over-the-counter bull tags that are valid in all of the Thompson Divide game management units. Over-the-counter tags keep hunting opportunities on public lands



**SIERRA
CLUB**

Roaring Fork Group, Colorado Chapter
Sierra Club

available to the average hunter and are becoming increasingly rare. Safeguarding places like the Thompson Divide ensure they will be there for future generations.

In addition to the outstanding hunting opportunities, fisheries in the Thompson Divide are equally exceptional. The Divide contains tributaries to the North Fork of the Gunnison River, the Crystal River, the Colorado River and the Roaring Fork River, which is a Gold Medal trout fishery. Without the continued input of the cold, clean water provided by the Thompson Divide backcountry, these fisheries would be degraded and in turn harm area fly shops and guide businesses.

Hunting and angling are exceptional economic drivers to the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide. According to a recent economic analysis, hunting and angling opportunities solely within the Divide support nearly 100 long-term, sustainable jobs and \$8.3 million in economic output for local communities.

The Divide also spans dozens of watersheds and provides domestic and agricultural water in the Crystal, Roaring Fork, and Colorado River valleys, and supports 8,000 acres of cropland in the North Fork Valley, one of the most productive organic farming regions in the nation. Our success in producing high-quality food is due to access to these public lands where oil and gas drilling is limited, and ecosystems are undisturbed. Ranchers, farmers, local governments and recreationalists recognize the tremendous value the Divide holds for our economy and livelihoods. Without maintaining the healthy and vibrant natural resources of the area, the economy that has so long sustained area businesses could be in jeopardy.

The local community has supported permanent protection of the Divide for over a decade, because oil and gas development in the area is not compatible with our local agricultural and recreational economy. There are appropriate places for energy development and there are inappropriate places to develop. Due to the already vibrant outdoor and agricultural-based economic structure in the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide, energy development there is simply not appropriate. Language in the CORE Act protects valid existing rights of the current leaseholders in the area and includes an additional option for them to trade-in their existing leases for what they have spent on them to date.

I would like to reiterate the Roaring Fork Group of the Colorado Chapter of the Sierra Club's support for the CORE Act, which is the most significant opportunity we have to permanently protect the Thompson Divide from future energy development. We look forward to working with your office and stakeholders to secure passage of this commonsense legislation.

Sincerely,

Delia G. Malone
Chair, Roaring Fork Group
Sierra Club, Colorado Chapter



**SOLAR ENERGY
INTERNATIONAL**

Educate.
Engage.
Empower.

March 27, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Solar Energy International Support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

I am writing to add the voice of Solar Energy International to those expressing support for the *Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act*. Solar Energy International is a 501(c)3 educational non-profit with a mission to provide industry-leading technical training and expertise in renewable energy to empower people, communities, and businesses worldwide. We are currently based on the Western Slope in Paonia, CO, but our organization was founded in Carbondale, CO back in 1991. Naturally, we have special ties to both the Roaring and North Fork Valleys, as well as all of Colorado's public lands that we so cherish. We support the CORE Act, because it protects so many of the public lands in Colorado that we care about, most importantly, the Thompson Divide outside of Carbondale, CO – for which more than 200,000 acres of public land would be permanently withdrawn from future oil and gas leasing.

By permanently protecting over 400,000 acres of public lands in Colorado, the CORE Act unites four iconic Colorado landscapes into a single bill. Protection for each landscape hosts a wide diversity of constituency support that includes local counties and municipalities, businesses, recreation and sportsmen groups, and conservationists.

The landscapes protected under the CORE Act have all been previously proposed for protection through the following bills:



SOLAR ENERGY INTERNATIONAL

39845 Mathews Lane, Paonia, CO 81428

phone: 970-527-7657 | fax: 970-527-7659 | email: sei@solarenergy.org | www.solarenergy.org



SOLAR ENERGY INTERNATIONAL

Educate.
Engage.
Empower.

1. Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act
2. The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act
3. Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act
4. Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Act

In particular, the Thompson Divide area is critically important to sportsmen in Colorado and across the nation. The hunting units that lie within the Divide are some of the most hunted units in Colorado, and generated nearly 20,000 big game license sales in 2012. Hunters are also able to purchase unlimited over-the-counter bull tags that are valid in all of the Thompson Divide game management units. Over-the-counter tags keep hunting opportunities on public lands available to the average hunter and are becoming increasingly rare. Safeguarding places like the Thompson Divide ensure they will be there for future generations.

In addition to the outstanding hunting opportunities, fisheries in the Thompson Divide are equally exceptional. The Divide contains tributaries to the North Fork of the Gunnison River, the Crystal River, the Colorado River and the Roaring Fork River, which is a Gold Medal trout fishery. Without the continued input of the cold, clean water provided by the Thompson Divide backcountry, these fisheries would be degraded and in turn harm area fly shops and guide businesses.

Hunting and angling are exceptional economic drivers to the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide. According to a recent economic analysis, hunting and angling opportunities solely within the Divide support nearly 100 long-term, sustainable jobs and \$8.3 million in economic output for local communities.

The Divide also spans dozens of watersheds and provides domestic and agricultural water in the Crystal, Roaring Fork, and Colorado River valleys, and supports 8,000 acres of cropland in the North Fork Valley, one of the most productive organic farming regions in the nation. Our success in producing high-quality food is due to access to these public lands where oil and gas drilling is limited, and ecosystems are undisturbed. Ranchers, farmers, local governments and recreationalists recognize the tremendous value the Divide holds for our economy and livelihoods. Without maintaining the healthy and vibrant natural resources of the area, the economy that has so long sustained area businesses could be in jeopardy.

The local community has supported permanent protection of the Divide for over a decade, because oil and gas development in the area is not compatible with our local agricultural and recreational economy. There are appropriate places for energy development and there are inappropriate places to develop. Due to the already vibrant outdoor and agricultural-based economic structure in the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide, energy development there is simply not appropriate. Language in the CORE Act protects valid existing rights of the current leaseholders in the area and includes an additional option for them to trade-in their existing leases for what they have spent on them to date.



SOLAR ENERGY INTERNATIONAL

39845 Mathews Lane, Paonia, CO 81428

phone: 970-527-7657 | fax: 970-527-7659 | email: sei@solarenergy.org | www.solarenergy.org



**SOLAR ENERGY
INTERNATIONAL**

Educate.
Engage.
Empower.

I would like to reiterate Solar Energy International's support for the CORE Act, which is the most significant opportunity we have to permanently protect the Thompson Divide from future energy development. We look forward to working with your office and stakeholders to secure passage of this common sense legislation.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Swartz, Executive Director
Solar Energy International



SOLAR ENERGY INTERNATIONAL

39845 Mathews Lane, Paonia, CO 81428

phone: 970-527-7657 | fax: 970-527-7659 | email: sei@solarenergy.org | www.solarenergy.org



PO Box 2
Carbondale, CO 81623
Ph. (970) 414-1078

March 28, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Mt. Sopris Historical Society (MSHS – Carbondale Historical Society) Support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

I am writing to add the voice of Mt. Sopris Historical Society to those expressing support for the *Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act*. The mission of the Mt. Sopris Historical Society is the preservation of the historical integrity of the Crystal River and the Roaring Fork Valleys of western Colorado. We work with other historical organizations to protect our historic values and to provide opportunities to learn our unique history and to educate all who understand the values of knowing our past. The Thompson House is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, as is the Redstone Castle in Redstone and the Colorado Hotel in Glenwood Springs. We support the CORE Act, because it protects so many of the public lands in Colorado that we care about, most importantly, the Thompson Divide outside of Carbondale, CO – for which more than 200,000 acres of public land would be permanently withdrawn from future oil and gas leasing. The protection and preservation of the site and the history of Camp Hale is significant, also, to our valley's history.

By permanently protecting more than 400,000 acres of public lands in Colorado, the CORE Act unites four iconic Colorado landscapes into a single bill. Protection for each landscape hosts a wide diversity of constituency support that includes local counties and municipalities, businesses, recreation and sportsmen groups, and conservationists.

The landscapes protected under the CORE Act have all been previously proposed for protection through the following bills:

1. Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act



PO Box 2
Carbondale, CO 81623
Ph. (970) 414-1078

2. The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act
3. Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act
4. Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Acts:

The Divide also spans dozens of watersheds and provides domestic and agricultural water in the Crystal, Roaring Fork, and Colorado River valleys, and supports 8,000 acres of cropland in the North Fork Valley, one of the most productive organic farming regions in the nation. Our success in producing high-quality food is due to access to these public lands where oil and gas drilling is limited, and ecosystems are undisturbed. Ranchers, farmers, local governments and recreationalists recognize the tremendous value the Divide holds for our economy and livelihoods. Without maintaining the healthy and vibrant natural resources of the area, the economy that has so long sustained area businesses could be in jeopardy. These resources represent our history of agriculture and community support for the needs of all who live in a challenging environment. Our history is tied to early settlements and changing agricultural needs.

The local community has supported permanent protection of the Divide for over a decade, because oil and gas development in the area is not compatible with our local agricultural and recreational economy. There are appropriate places for energy development and there are inappropriate places to develop. Due to the already vibrant outdoor and agricultural-based economic structure in the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide, energy development there is simply not appropriate. Language in the CORE Act protects valid existing rights of the current leaseholders in the area and includes an additional option for them to trade-in their existing leases for what they have spent on them to date.

I would like to reiterate Carbondale Historical Society – Mt. Sopris Historical Society support for the CORE Act, which is the most significant opportunity we have to permanently protect the Thompson Divide from future energy development. We look forward to working with your office and stakeholders to secure passage of this commonsense legislation.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Farris

Mt.Sopris Historical Society - Carbondale Historic Society
Board of Directors, Dorothea Farris Member

Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association
PO Box 921, Carbondale, Colorado



March 28, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association Support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

I am writing to add the voice of CVEPA, the Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association to those expressing support for the *Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act*. Our mission is to protect the environmental integrity of the Crystal River Valley, and beyond.... when the goals of the protection meet our needs and our values. We support the CORE Act, because it protects so many of the public lands in Colorado that we care about, most importantly, the Thompson Divide outside of Carbondale, CO – for which more than 200,000 acres of public land would be permanently withdrawn from future oil and gas leasing.

By permanently protecting more than 400,000 acres of public lands in Colorado, the CORE Act unites four iconic Colorado landscapes into a single bill. Protection for each landscape hosts a wide diversity of constituency support that includes local counties and municipalities, businesses, recreation and sportsmen groups, and conservationists.

The landscapes protected under the CORE Act have all been previously proposed for protection through the following bills:

1. Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act
2. The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act
3. Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act

Peter Westcott Dorothea Farnis Chuck Downey Bill Jochems Bill Spence
Dale Will John Armstrong John Hoffman John Stickney Mike Mechau



4. Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Acts

The Thompson Divide area is critically important to protect the needed habitat for Colorado's wildlife. In addition to the outstanding hunting opportunities, fisheries in the Thompson Divide are equally exceptional. The Divide contains tributaries to the North Fork of the Gunnison River, the Crystal River, the Colorado River and the Roaring Fork River, which is a Gold Medal trout fishery. Without the continued input of the cold, clean water provided by the Thompson Divide backcountry, this habitat and these fisheries would be degraded.

The Divide also spans dozens of watersheds and provides domestic and agricultural water in the Crystal, Roaring Fork, and Colorado River valleys, and supports 8,000 acres of cropland in the North Fork Valley, one of the most productive organic farming regions in the nation. Our success in producing high-quality food is due to access to these public lands where oil and gas drilling is limited, and ecosystems are undisturbed. Ranchers, farmers, local governments and recreationalists recognize the tremendous value the Divide holds for our economy and livelihoods. Without maintaining the healthy and vibrant natural resources of the area, the economy that has so long sustained area businesses could be in jeopardy.

The local community has supported permanent protection of the Divide for over a decade, because oil and gas development in the area is not compatible with our local agricultural, resident, and recreational economy. There are appropriate places for energy development and there are inappropriate places to develop. Due to the already vibrant outdoor and agricultural-based economic structure in the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide, energy development there is simply not appropriate. Language in the CORE Act protects valid existing rights of the current leaseholders in the area and includes an additional option for them to trade-in their existing leases for what they have spent on them to date.

I would like to reiterate CVEPA support for the CORE Act, which is the most significant opportunity we have to permanently protect the Thompson Divide from future energy development. We look forward to working with your office and stakeholders to secure passage of this commonsense legislation and to protect the environmental integrity of our region of care.

Sincerely, CVEPA chairperson

Dorothea Farris

<i>Peter Westcott</i>	<i>Dorothea Farris</i>	<i>Chuck Downey</i>	<i>Bill Jochems</i>	<i>Bill Spence</i>
<i>Dale Will</i>	<i>John Armstrong</i>	<i>John Hoffman</i>	<i>John Stickney</i>	<i>Mike Mechau</i>



April 1, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for S.241/H.R.823 – Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE)–(116th Congress)

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Neguse, and Representative Tipton:

Based upon the position of support by our local members and affiliate organizations, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) writes to express our support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act.

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational association whose mission is to create, enhance and protect great places to ride mountain bikes. Founded in 1988, IMBA leads the national and worldwide mountain bicycling communities through a network of 140,000 individual supporters, subscribers and affiliate members. Each year, IMBA members conduct more than a million hours of volunteer trail stewardship on America's public lands and are some of the best assistants to federal, state, and local land managers.

Since 2010, IMBA has worked consistently with our local members and organized mountain bike groups and a variety of other stakeholders to ensure that mountain biking interests are protected, enhanced and planned for along with the natural resource and ecological values of these landscapes in the San Juan Mountains of SouthWest Colorado and Central Mountains of Summit and Eagle Counties. This includes our directly affected Eagle and Summit County chapters Vail Valley Mountain Bike Alliance and Summit Fat Tire Society, as well as the Silverton Singletrack Society, San Miguel Mountain Bike Alliance and Trails 2000 in the San Juan Mountains of SW Colorado.

We greatly appreciate the concerted effort by the office and staff of Senator Michael Bennet to address our concerns in the development of this bill. We have worked collaboratively, over the years, to provide input about mountain bike trails that may be impacted by the Wilderness protections in the proposal and there has been a genuine effort to address access issues we identified during the process. While we maintain that no bill is likely perfect from anyone's viewpoint, through open dialogue, consensus building and a commitment to ongoing communications, together we have resolved the concerns of mountain bikers and we fully support the current bill.

International Mountain Bicycling Association

PO Box 20280
Boulder, CO 80308
303-545-9011
www.imba.com



Model Legislation

The proposals included in the CORE act represent a modern approach to land protection that strikes a recreation and conservation-friendly balance through a community driven process. They include components that advance our missions and we are confident they will result in better mountain biking and land protection in Colorado. We are proud to be able to stand by the process, the relationships, and the end product that represents the CORE Act and this ensures our support.

Due to the permanence and level of protections that a Wilderness designation affords, IMBA believes Wilderness designations must be made carefully and with the broadest possible stakeholder engagement and support. Wilderness is an appropriate designation when it is arrived at through an open and landscape-level collaborative process that fully considers options for more flexible protective designations in some areas where desired and addresses the diversity of ways in which people presently access and wish to sustainably enjoy and engage with their public lands in the future. The CORE Act meets the high standards we place on how bills get crafted and it establishes a model for how conservation legislation should be developed.

We maintain that fair process and good relationships are essential to keeping mountain bikers and others engaged and supportive of public lands and that sustainable recreation activities must be included and accounted for in land management and legislative decision making.

Additionally, Colorado's spectacular public lands are vital to the state's outdoor recreation economy and these lands and the recreation they host must be protected. In 2017, outdoor recreation contributed \$62 billion to Colorado's economy and \$35 billion to the state's Gross Domestic Product - which is more than 10 percent - while supporting 511,000 direct jobs, according to Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The outdoor economy contributes \$2 billion in state and local taxes annually, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. The CORE Act helps ensure that the balance of this recreation economy will be maintained.

Bike-Friendly Components

We are proud of the collective work that has led to the myriad changes, refinements, and adjustments that has, in each iteration over the years, resulted in better outcomes for mountain biking and sustainable natural resource management and public support. Mountain bikers must be afforded opportunities to enjoy their public lands, from frontcountry to backcountry; and have good reason to believe that our country's system for protecting public lands—viewed as a whole—works for them and can be supported.

Aside from the Wilderness acres championed by our partners and other stakeholders, the CORE Act specifically accounts for and benefits mountain biking and mountain biking advocacy in a number of significant ways. The CORE Act utilizes special designations such as the 17,000 acre Tenmile Recreation Management Area, Williams Fork Wildlife Conservation Area, Ophir Valley Area and others to protect and address mountain biking assets and interests appropriately. Throughout the CORE Act, the bill utilizes non-wilderness trail corridors, cherry stems, and boundary adjustments to protect and preserve both existing trail assets and future mountain biking advocacy goals so that the mountain biking community

International Mountain Bicycling Association

PO Box 20280
Boulder, CO 80308
303-545-9011
www.imba.com



INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

benefits now and into the future by retaining the availability of trail connections, enhancements and new trail developments while retaining access to all existing trails.

These special designation landscapes and trail accommodations make invaluable contributions not only to clean air, clean water, and healthy wildlife populations; but also support gateway public lands communities and recreation economies; and allow more Americans—from urban to rural—to experience their public lands in meaningful ways that foster a sense of shared ownership and stewardship. Land managers and Congress must continue to employ a range of designations and accommodations represented in the CORE Act to meet the needs of Americans and we are pleased to see this achieved in the CORE Act.

For these reasons, IMBA is proud to support the S.241/H.R.823 – Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act and we encourage Congress to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Aaron Clark
International Mountain Bicycling Association

International Mountain Bicycling Association

PO Box 20280
Boulder, CO 80308
303-545-9011
www.imba.com

March 28th, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: TRCP Support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

I am writing to express the support of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) for the *Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act*. The TRCP is a national conservation organization working to guarantee all Americans quality places to hunt and fish. The TRCP works with our 58 formal partners and represents over 92,000 individual members and supporters nationally. We support the CORE Act because it would safeguard many of the public lands in Colorado that we care about, most importantly, the Thompson Divide outside of Carbondale, CO – for which more than 200,000 acres of public land would be permanently withdrawn from future oil and gas leasing.

By permanently protecting over 400,000 acres of public lands in Colorado, the CORE Act unites four iconic Colorado landscapes into a single bill. Protection for each landscape hosts a wide breadth of constituent support that includes local counties and municipalities, businesses, recreation and sportsmen groups, and other conservationists.

The landscapes protected under the CORE Act have all been previously proposed for protection through the following bills:

- Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act
- The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act
- Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act
- Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Act:

The hunting units that are encompassed within the Thompson Divide are some of the most hunted units in Colorado and drew thousands of hunters to the area in 2018. Hunters are also able to purchase unlimited over-the-counter bull tags that are valid in all of the Thompson Divide game management units. These hunting tags provide readily available hunting opportunities to the average hunter, something that is becoming increasingly uncommon in a crowded world. Safeguarding places like the Thompson Divide will ensure that these opportunities will be there for years to come.

In addition to the outstanding hunting opportunities, fisheries in the Thompson Divide are exceptional. The Divide contains tributaries to the North Fork of the Gunnison River, the Crystal River, the Colorado River and the Roaring Fork River, which is a Gold Medal trout fishery. Without the continued input of the cold, clean water provided by the Thompson Divide backcountry, these fisheries would be degraded and in turn harm area fly shops and guide businesses.

Hunting and angling are exceptional economic drivers to the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide. According to a recent economic analysis, hunting and angling opportunities solely within the Divide support nearly 100 long-term, sustainable jobs and \$8.3 million in economic output for local communities.

The local community has supported permanent protection of the Divide for over a decade. There are appropriate places for energy development and there are inappropriate places. Due to the already vibrant outdoor and agricultural-based economic structure in the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide, the area is simply not suitable for energy development. Language in the CORE Act protects valid existing rights of the current leaseholders in the area and includes an additional option for companies to trade-in their existing leases and be reimbursed for their expenses.

We support the CORE Act and look forward to working with your office and stakeholders to secure passage of this common-sense legislation.

Sincerely,

Nick Payne, Colorado Representative and Leasing Policy Specialist
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership



National Wildlife Federation

National Advocacy Center

1200 G Street NW, Suite 900 • Washington, DC 20005 • 202-797-6800

April 2, 2019

Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Deb Haaland
Chair, Subcommittee on National
Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
U.S. House of Representatives
1237 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Chairwoman Haaland:

I write today on behalf of the National Wildlife Federation in support of H.R. 823, the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act, sponsored by Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO). I also write as a sportsman and father. The new wilderness, special management, national recreation, and other designations in the legislation will ensure that families like mine will always have special places in Colorado to hunt, fish, and recreate. We appreciate the Committee taking action on this important piece of conservation legislation.

One area of special importance to me, and the broader hunting and fishing community, that the legislation would protect is western Colorado's Thompson Divide—a vast, breathtaking, one-of-a-kind landscape rich with wild country and abundant fish and wildlife populations. Places such as Thompson Divide are invaluable to public land users and the communities that depend upon their sustainable revenue sources.

The Thompson Divide sprawls over 220,000 acres, roughly half of which are roadless. Due to its low- to mid-elevations, these roadless tracts provide refuge for numerous economically and ecologically important wildlife species, including large populations of elk. This intact lower elevation habitat accounts for what is arguably the finest elk habitat in the United States. It is also exceptional habitat for songbirds, the endangered lynx and numerous other species in need of conservation.

The clear, cold waters coursing through the creeks and streams of Thompson Divide's valleys team with healthy populations of threatened native Colorado River cutthroat trout, and provide vital source water for the Roaring Fork and Crystal Rivers. It provides much of the clean drinking water for area communities, and sustains ranching, grazing, and other agricultural operations as well.

The area's importance is compounded by the fact that the White River National Forest, in which the Thompson Divide lies, is the most visited forest in the country. The economic activity this outdoor recreation provides has sustained local communities for decades. High use coupled with the high rate of growth for Colorado and the West demands that

we exercise foresight and conserve the special character that has long defined the people and places of Colorado.

Unfortunately, this visually stunning, ecologically important, and economically vital area has been leased for oil and gas development in the past, and unless Congress acts to provide permanent protection that threat will persist. There are appropriate places in Colorado to pursue energy development, but Thompson Divide is not one of them. All Americans should have the opportunity to experience land bustling with wildlife, abundant fresh water, trout filled streams, and outstanding views; as well as the peace and solitude that comes with it—it is essential to the American ethos. That is what Thompson Divide offers to all those who seek it. It is truly a wild, mid-elevation gem, and should be safeguarded for our enjoyment today, and all future generations.

H.R. 823 contains many other provisions that would protect some of Colorado's most wild and historic landscapes. It would add more than 31,000 acres of wilderness in southwestern Colorado's San Juan Mountains, and create more than 22,000 acres of special management areas there to, in part, be managed for the benefit and conservation of wildlife. These too are critical to hunting, angling, and numerous outdoor pursuits that define Colorado and ensure our way of life.

In addition to Thompson Divide on the White River National Forest, the bill would protect approximately 51,000 acres of wilderness and other conservation units, and create the Porcupine Gulch and Williams Fork Wildlife Conservation Areas. H.R. 823 would also create our nation's first National Historic Landscape by protecting nearly 30,000 acres surrounding Camp Hale, where thousands of soldiers trained during World War II in what would become the 10th Mountain Division.

The National Wildlife Federation has supported protection of these areas for years. It is right for Colorado, our country's public lands and future generations, particularly in light of nearby growth and the demands on the West's public lands. We proudly lend our full support to H.R. 823, the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act.

Thank you, and please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Kindle', with a stylized, flowing script.

Aaron Kindle
Senior Manager
Western Sporting Campaigns
National Wildlife Federation



Kate Miller
Director of Government Affairs

April 3, 2019

The Honorable Deb Haaland, Chair
House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands

The Honorable Don Young, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands

RE: House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Markup on HR.823 Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act 04/02/2019.

Dear Chair Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and members of the Committee,

Trout Unlimited supports H.R.823, the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act, and it's individual components: The Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act, the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and the Curecanti National Recreation Area (NRA) Boundary Establishment Act. This bill would increase protections for a variety of public lands in Colorado that are very important to TU's 300,000 members and supporters across the country, including several thousand members who call Colorado home.

Trout Unlimited's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and the watersheds upon which they depend. In Colorado, hunters, anglers and wildlife viewers had a \$5.1 billion economic impact in 2017. Public lands, and specifically protected areas, serve as the bedrock of that economy. Hunting and fishing rely on healthy watersheds, but so do downstream communities. Colorado's position as a headwaters state and an outdoor recreation hub cements the need for the CORE Act. It would simultaneously provide watershed protections and intelligent public land management decisions for current and future generations of Coloradans, along with millions of others downstream.

More than a dozen counties and municipalities from the affected landscapes have drafted resolutions and written letters in support of the CORE Act, and papers across the state have editorialized in favor of the bill. The 24 Trout Unlimited chapters across Colorado share that enthusiastic local support. Communities have come together, in some instances for decades, to identify places that deserve protection. As the population in Colorado is set to double by 2050, these communities are rallying to keep their special places special so that they might continue to be enjoyed now and in the future.

Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act

Following several years of collaboration and compromise among local communities, land planners, legislators and relevant stakeholders, the resulting bill secures permanent protection for 58,492 acres of vital wildlife habitat, critical watersheds and valuable recreation areas along the Continental Divide. It creates three new Wilderness areas in the Tenmile Range, Hoosier Ridge and Williams Fork Mountains, and expands existing Wilderness designations at Eagles Nest, Ptarmigan Peak and Holy Cross while establishing a new Recreation Management Area that maintains important recreation resources and access for mountain bikers, hikers and other users.

The bill safeguards fishing and hunting opportunities by protecting ecologically important habitat to native cutthroat trout, black bear, elk, mule deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, moose and lynx. Protected areas serve as headwaters to the Eagle, Arkansas, Blue and Colorado rivers, which are among the state's most heavily utilized for recreational, municipal and agricultural use.

Additionally, the bill would designate the first-ever National Historic Landscape at Camp Hale, where the storied 10th Mountain Division trained during World War II and planted the seeds for Colorado's modern outdoor recreation economy built around skiing, hunting, fishing and all the other activities that emerged from their legacy. TU recognizes the contributions of these brave soldiers to our existing quality of life and believes that heritage should be acknowledged along with the surrounding terrain that inspired them.

San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act

This bill, the result of more than 15-years of local community collaboration, includes important protections for the headwaters of the San Miguel, the Uncompahgre and the Animas watersheds. It also includes protections for some of the state's most iconic peaks including Mount Sneffels and Wilson Peak.

As a leading advocate for the conservation of fish and wildlife habitats, we enthusiastically support the 61,000 acres of protections that are included in the bill. These lands are critically important for many resources including fish, wildlife, recreation, and watersheds.

The footprint of areas directly protected by the bill includes 2.5 miles of Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat, and 17 total river miles; protections that would have positive impacts far downstream. Fish and wildlife in the area would benefit from the proposed designation, and migration corridors for elk, deer, and rocky mountain bighorn sheep would be prioritized and protected. Some of the best hunting and fishing in the state would be protected for future generations because of this bill.

Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act

TU has been a leading voice among sportsmen fighting for protection of the Thompson Divide for more than a decade. The roughly 200,000-acre backcountry expanse in the White River and Gunnison National Forests south of Carbondale is recognized by Colorado Parks and Wildlife as high value habitat for deer, elk, moose, bears and lynx, includes conservation populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout, and provides clean water to more than 15 watersheds in the region, including tributaries of the Crystal,

Gunnison and Colorado rivers, and the Gold Medal trout waters on the Roaring Fork River. Overlapping some of the richest game-management units in the state, the area generates more than 20,000 big game licenses every year and accounts for significant annual contributions to Colorado's outdoor recreation economy.

The current bill improves upon previous iterations by incorporating a methane capture provision and lease exchange credits for the few remaining holders of undeveloped leases within a withdrawal boundary that has been redrawn to accommodate the requests of potentially impacted stakeholders. Bolstered by the support of a broad-based community coalition, federal legislation is the final remaining step to achieving long-term protections from inappropriate energy development in the region and has TU's full endorsement.

Curecanti National Recreation Area (NRA) Boundary Establishment Act

The bill would place management of the 50,667-acre Curecanti National Recreation Area established in 1965 around Gunnison County's Blue Mesa Reservoir under the sole direction of the National Park Service. Boundary adjustments would allow for more efficient management of a large swath of public land and ease the burden on multiple agencies. The legislation would also enforce an existing obligation to acquire approximately 16 additional miles of public fishing opportunities within the Upper Gunnison Basin upstream of Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park.

The bill ensures that the Bureau of Reclamation upholds its commitment to expand high-quality public fishing access in the basin, which was lost to inundation when Blue Mesa and Curecanti NRA were created. This additional river access would be a major success story for the communities of Gunnison County and the rest of the angling, boating, birding, and recreating public. The residents of Colorado are due these river miles, but also know the importance of responsible public land management. Being good stewards to our public lands means seeking out simple and effective solutions, and this bill fits that mold.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering our views on this legislation. We look forward to working with the bill sponsors, members of Colorado delegation, and members of this committee to advance a bipartisan proposal during the 116th Congress.

For questions related to these comments, please contact the following:

Scott Willoughby
Colorado Field Coordinator
scott.willoughby@tu.org

Kate Miller
Director of Government Affairs
kate.miller@tu.org



TOWN OF MOUNTAIN VILLAGE
455 Mountain Village Blvd. Suite A
Mountain Village, CO 81435
970-369-6406
970-728-4342 Fax
mvclerk@mntnvillage.org

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

April 4, 2019

Dear Senator Bennet:

The Town of Mountain Village appreciates the opportunity to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act). We truly value the years of leadership you have shown on protecting public lands in Colorado, and we commend you for introducing this visionary legislation alongside Congressman Neguse. The public lands of our state support this community's quality of life and our sustainable outdoor recreation-driven economies. We also believe that our clean air, clean water, and public health are directly linked to the protection of our public lands.

In particular, we appreciate that the CORE Act carries forward protections that we have long supported in the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, last introduced in the 2018 Congress. Protections for the San Juan Mountains have enjoyed remarkably consistent and broad support, including all three counties where the lands are located, five major local municipalities (including ours), well over 100 local businesses, and a wide array of affected stakeholders. These stakeholders include ranchers, sportsmen, private landowners, recreation groups, the area's only operating mining company, and our own Telluride ski resort. We believe that it is high time the 61,000 acres proposed in our area were permanently protected.

We also appreciate the additional components the CORE act includes, such as protections that balance conservation and recreation in the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act, the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and the Curecanti National Boundary Establishment Act. In the connected landscapes of the Southwest, each of these proposed protected areas uplifts and helps support the communities and wildlife that depend on the others.

The four elements of the CORE Act are all reflective of and accountable to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, with carefully drawn boundaries and thoughtful designations. We are appreciative that these proposed designations were locally developed to address existing and future recreation, wildlife habitat, wildfire management, agricultural and water supply needs.

Millions of people visit Colorado each year, and our federal public lands contribute immeasurably to our economy and quality of life. But we must have the vision to protect what is wilderness, create ongoing opportunities for sustainable recreation, and conserve wildlife habitat. We believe that the CORE Act strikes that balance.

We hope that Colorado's congressional delegation will prioritize passage of the CORE Act in the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,

Laila Benitez, Mayor



March 25, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Bennet and Representative Neguse,

As Great Old Broads for Wilderness, we are writing to express our deep gratitude for the introduction of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Economy (CORE) Act. As Denver and other cities throughout the state of Colorado experience unprecedented change and growth, now is the time for a conservation bill that will continue to sustain our high quality of life by protecting public lands and open space; growing outdoor recreation; expanding economic development; and increasing educational opportunities.

For years, we have been enjoying public lands that make wild Colorado so unique and cherished. The Continental Divide, San Juan Mountains, and the Colorado Trail are sources of community pride. Colorado's public lands yield tremendous value to our state, bringing in \$62.5 billion to the outdoor recreation economy.

As a national nonprofit organization with an organized statewide voice (several active grassroots chapters in Colorado), we understand the need to grow our economy and preserve our quality of life to ensure our great state's future success. We also know that protecting our wildest public lands is an important element of that success. Great Old Broads' national membership of more than 8,500 friends and supporters travel from all over the country to Colorado to vacation in the mountains, backpack in our wilderness areas, hunt prized game such as elk and deer, and visit the historic Camp Hale.

The CORE Act is a celebration of the public's love for wild public lands and the desire to recreate, vacation, and simply get out into the great outdoors. This important bill encompasses 400,000 acres of public lands protections, 70,000 acres of wilderness, and weaves together four invaluable proposals into one signature ask by protecting elements from the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, Continental Divide and Camp Hale proposals, Thompson Divide mineral withdrawal and the Curecanti National Recreation Area.

Colorado lawmakers have a history of working together to address issues facing the rural and urban regions of our state. The CORE Act is an opportunity to resolve a series of longstanding major public interest issues in and around the wild state of Colorado. It will provide lasting benefits for our economy, opportunities for diverse recreation, keep wildlife habitat intact, and protect wide-open public lands. In short, it will enhance our high quality of life for now and for generations to come.

We urge you to work together to help secure a brighter future for our threatened wildlife, habitat corridors and some of our last wild places. Thank you for supporting the CORE Act (the largest Colorado wilderness package in 25 years) and standing behind the majority of Americans who speak out for the protection of our public lands.

Sincerely,

Lauren Berutich,
Associate Director
Great Old Broads for Wilderness

And our Colorado Chapters:

Grand Junction Broadband
Northern San Juans Broadband
Southern San Juans Broadband
Northwest Colorado Broadband
Roaring Fork Broadband
South Park Broadband
Mile High Broadband



April 1, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for Legislation Withdrawing Thompson Divide from Future Oil and Gas Leasing

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

For nearly a decade, the Town of Snowmass Village has supported conservation of public lands in the Thompson Divide. As a Town Council we value the continued conservation of these lands and support the recent legislation withdrawing the Thompson Divide from future oil and gas leasing

In 2012, the Town of Snowmass Village endorsed the Thompson Divide Coalition's efforts to "secure protections from oil and gas development on federal lands in the Thompson Divide Area" and to seek "federal legislation to permanently withdraw the area from availability for future leasing." See Exhibit 1.

Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Joe Neguse recently introduced bills in both houses of Congress that respond to requests to permanently protect public lands in the Thompson Divide. The bills, commonly referred to as the Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy (CORE) Act, include provisions that would permanently withdraw the Thompson Divide from availability for future oil and gas leasing.

We support provisions of the Core Act that will protect public lands in the Thompson Divide with a permanent withdrawal from availability for future leasing, and we thank our legislators for listening to our communities, local citizens, and people from across the country who have consistently requested legislation offering this protection.

We request that Colorado's congressional delegation to work together to pass this common-sense legislation that protects public lands critical to our local economy, respects valid-existing rights of leaseholders in the Thompson Divide Area, and includes language offering credits to any leaseholder that wants to get rid of leases within the withdrawal boundary.

Thank you for your continued efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Markey Butler", written in a cursive style.

Markey Butler
Mayor

CC: Bob Sirkus, Mayor Pro Tem
Bill Madsen, Town Councilman
Alyssa Shenk, Town Councilwoman
Tom Goode, Town Councilman
Clinton Kinney, Town Manager



TOWN of FRISCO

P.O. Box 4100 • Frisco, Colorado 80443
(970) 668-5276

May 7, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
The Honorable Cory Gardner
The Honorable Scott Tipton
The Honorable Joe Neguse

RE: The Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton and Representative Neguse:

On behalf of the Frisco Town Council, we are pleased to convey our support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (H.R. 823 and S. 241). The Town of Frisco supported the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness and Camp Hale Protection Act, and we appreciate that its provisions have been incorporated as Title I of the CORE Act.

The public lands of the White River National Forest around Frisco contribute significantly to the quality of life for our citizens and visitors alike. From our survey of Frisco residents, 62% of respondents indicated that recreational amenities were the reason they lived in Frisco. The protections included in this bill are critical to maintaining those amenities.

Of particular interest to Frisco is the proposed Tenmile Recreation Management Area, which is adjacent to our town and which will help to protect and enhance the popular mountain biking, hiking, camping, hunting, and other outdoor activities that occur on these national forest lands, along with the important wildlife habitat and watershed values of the landscape. The legislation includes thoughtful language to address forest health and wildfire protection, while at the same time protecting the important scenic, recreation, wildlife, and watershed values from commercial logging projects that would adversely impact the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the recreational, scenic, watershed, habitat, and ecological resources of the lands. It also protects valid existing rights, including the rights of private property owners.

The Town of Frisco appreciates the collaborative efforts that have led to these provisions of the CORE Act and that the bill reflects the input of the Town and many of our residents. We look forward to continuing to work with you to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Gary Wilkinson
Mayor
Frisco Town Council

May 6, 2019

Colorado Office

1410 Grant Street
Suite D210
Denver, CO
80203

T: 303.837.1414

F: 303.837.1131
tpl.org

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, Representative Tipton, and Representative Neguse:

The Trust for Public Land is pleased to support the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act (S. 241 & H.R. 823). The Trust for Public Land's mission is to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. The CORE Act is a great example of collaboration within and among communities across Colorado to ensure that some of our most critical public lands are protected in a way that sustains their most important values and benefits local communities.

In particular, the CORE Act would help finalize the goals of a project the Trust for Public Land has been investing in for nearly two decades—working cooperatively with individual owners of inholdings within the Sheep Mountain Special Management Area, the Wilson Addition to the Mount Sneffels Wilderness, and the Liberty Bell Addition to the Lizard Head Wilderness to acquire land into public ownership in federally-established areas for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. All told, the Trust for Public Land has acquired over 1,500 acres within those areas, some of which are included in Title II of the CORE Act. Our non-federal partners, including local communities such as the Town of Ophir, and the San Miguel Conservation Foundation, have complemented our efforts with other acquisitions in those areas to benefit the conservation, recreation, and watershed protection goals of Title II of the CORE Act.

From the San Juan Mountains and the peaks of the Continental Divide, to the waters of the Curecanti and the ranchlands of the Thompson Divide, we believe the CORE Act is critical to maintaining and enhancing the recreation, culture, history, clean air and water, wildlife, and associated economies of communities across Colorado. This bill supports Colorado's outdoor recreation economy, a \$62.5 billion economic output juggernaut. We look forward to helping you advance the CORE Act through Congress and pass on its important public lands legacy to future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James R. Petterson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James R. Petterson
Colorado & Southwest State Director
The Trust for Public Land



May 21, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Neguse
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: The Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner, and Representative Neguse:

The public lands around the Town of Dillon contribute significantly to the quality of life of our residents and our local economy. The Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act will protect and improve the management of those public lands to benefit sustainable outdoor recreation, our watershed, and natural resources, and the Town of Dillon is pleased to support it.

Of particular interest to the Town of Dillon are the proposed Porcupine Wildlife Conservation Area and additions to the Ptarmigan Creek Wilderness included in Title I of the bill. Those provisions will help protect a primary drinking water source for the Town of Dillon and the Dillon Valley Metropolitan District, as well as one of the most important wildlife migration corridors in the state and a key watershed for the Town. We appreciate that these and other provisions from the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act (which we also supported) were included in the CORE Act.

We appreciate the broad outreach and collaborative efforts over many years that led to a balanced approach that respects the diverse interests of local stakeholders and favorably responds to the input of the Town of Dillon. The provisions of the CORE Act have been well-vetted and have awaited congressional action for years. We urge you to prioritize its enactment.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Skowrya
Mayor, Town of Dillon