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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0609

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The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Democratic Leader Schumer:

I write to urge you to include S. 2721, the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act in any end-of-year public lands package. The San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act is the product of years of collaboration among local stakeholders in San Miguel, San Juan, and Ouray Counties. The bipartisan county commissions who represent these communities have been asking Congress to pass this bill for over a decade. It is time for Congress to do its job and move this bill across the finish line.

The San Juan Mountain Wilderness Act would designate around 31,000 acres of new or expanded wilderness and designate 21,675 acres as the Sheep Mountain Special Management Area. First introduced in 2009, the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act received bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress starting in 2010. It is widely supported in Southwest Colorado, including by local recreation advocates, sportsmen, mountain bike clubs, and the Telluride Ski Area. The only active hardrock mine in the area, Ouray Silver Mines, has provided support for the wilderness designations near its mine. The Governor of Colorado and five towns in the region also support the bill.

Southwest Colorado cannot wait any longer for Washington to act. The time is now to pass this bill. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator