



Post Office Box 975
100 Mikaela Way
Avon, CO 81620

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

March 10, 2026

RE: Support for Forest Resources Accountability Act

Dear Senator Bennet,

On behalf of the Town Council of Avon, Colorado, we write to express our strong support for your Forest Resources Accountability Act.

We are concerned about the White River National Forest's reduced staffing and capacity at a time when the US Forest Service is struggling to maintain trails, address wildfire risk, reduce hazardous fuels, and protect watersheds and wildlife habitat; this has real and significant impacts at the local level. In addition, we see that spending US Forest Service Staff time to process & review the application and plans to build a new year-round, paved access road to support one private, remote residential development (Berlaimont Estates) is not a public benefit and would also take time away from more critical US Forest Service priorities.

The White River National Forest is central to the Town of Avon's economy and way of life. We are concerned about diverting already very limited US Forest Service resources from critical stewardship activities on the National Forest, like wildfire mitigation and recreation management. Your legislation appropriately prioritizes public benefits of National Forest lands while still maintaining reasonable access to the private in-holding.

Thank you for your continued leadership on issues that matter deeply to the Town of Avon, Eagle County and western Colorado.

Sincerely,

Tamra N. Underwood

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tamra N. Underwood".

Mayor, Town of Avon
tunderwood@avon.org



Edwards Metropolitan District

February 25, 2026

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

Dear Senator Bennet:

On behalf of the Edwards Metropolitan District Board of Directors, we write to express our strong support for your Forest Resources Accountability Act and our opposition to the proposed Berlaimont Estates access road project to 19 luxury estates in the White River National Forest.

We are concerned about the Forest Service's reduced staffing and capacity at a time when the agency is struggling to maintain trails, address wildfire risk, reduce hazardous fuels, and protect watersheds and wildlife habitat. Approving new year-round access to support residential development would also expand the wildland-urban interface and increase long-term federal firefighting obligations.

The White River National Forest is central to Edwards's economy and way of life. Forest Service environmental analysis has identified risks associated with the Berlaimont access road, including fragmentation of important winter habitat for deer and elk, potential water quality impacts, and increased disturbance from expanded year-round human activity. We are concerned about diverting already very limited Forest Service resources from critical stewardship activities on the national forest, like wildfire mitigation and recreation management, to support a private, luxury project with well-documented impacts to our public lands.

For these reasons, the Edwards Metropolitan District opposes any federal spending to the Berlaimont development's associated road construction. Expanding permanent road infrastructure in designated winter range would place lasting pressure on public lands that support both regional ecosystems and local economic sustainability.

The legislation appropriately prioritizes public benefit uses of National Forest lands while maintaining reasonable access to private inholdings. Limiting new permanent road construction in sensitive habitat, maintaining existing seasonal access, and encouraging voluntary acquisition of the parcel for conservation reflect a balanced approach to public lands stewardship.

Thank you for your continued leadership on issues that matter deeply to Eagle County and western Colorado. We appreciate your attention to this matter and stand ready to support your efforts as this legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,


Michael Trueblood (Feb 25, 2026 10:29:11 MST)

Edwards Metropolitan District Board of Directors



Town of Minturn, Colorado
302 Pine St.
Minturn, CO 81645

February 4, 2026

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

Dear Senator Bennet,

On behalf of the Town Council of Minturn, Colorado, we write to express our strong support for your Forest Resources Accountability Act and our opposition to the proposed Berlaimont Estates access road project to 19 luxury estates in the White River National Forest.

We are concerned about the Forest Service's reduced staffing and capacity at a time when the agency is struggling to maintain trails, address wildfire risk, reduce hazardous fuels, and protect watersheds and wildlife habitat. Approving new year-round access to support residential development would also expand the wildland-urban interface and increase long-term federal firefighting obligations.

The White River National Forest is central to the Town of Minturn's economy and way of life. Forest Service environmental analysis has identified risks associated with the Berlaimont access road, including fragmentation of important winter habitat for deer and elk, potential water quality impacts, and increased disturbance from expanded year-round human activity. We are concerned about diverting already very limited Forest Service resources from critical stewardship activities on the national forest, like wildfire mitigation and recreation management, to support a private, luxury project with well-documented impacts to our public lands.

For these reasons, the Town of Minturn opposes the Berlaimont development and associated road construction. Expanding permanent road infrastructure in designated winter range would place lasting pressure on public lands that support both regional ecosystems and local economic sustainability.

Your legislation appropriately prioritizes public benefit uses of National Forest lands while maintaining reasonable access to private inholdings. Limiting new permanent road construction in sensitive habitat, maintaining existing seasonal access, and encouraging voluntary acquisition of the parcel for conservation reflect a balanced approach to public lands stewardship.

Thank you for your continued leadership on issues that matter deeply to Eagle County and western Colorado. We appreciate your attention to this matter and stand ready to support your efforts as this legislation moves forward.

Approved by motion and vote of the Minturn Town Council on February 4, 2026.

Sincerely,

The Mayor and Town Council
Town of Minturn, Colorado



Contact: David Geddes
Phone: 970.827.5406 x 703
Email: geddes@eagleriverco.org
3/16/2026

In support of the Forest Resources Accountability Act

Dear Senator Bennet,

The Eagle River Coalition (ERC) is a non-profit organization with a mission of advocating for the health of the Eagle River Watershed and the Upper Colorado River Basin. The Eagle River Watershed includes 970 square miles, much of which is on public lands. The water that flows through our creeks and streams is used for the sustenance of over 55,000 residents, the irrigation of over 150,000 acres of farmland, and provides artificial snow, navigable rapids, fish habitat, and scenic beauty for our tourism industry, the lifeblood of our local economy. In the face of our driest winter on record, we believe that any threat to the health of our watershed is a threat to the future of our valley. We urge our representatives to support the Forest Resources Accountability Act, which would prohibit the use of federal funds on the Berlaimont development, define reasonable use as the existing road, and direct the Secretary of Agriculture to purchase the property from a voluntary, willing seller.

In 2024, ERC published the [Eagle River Community Water Plan](#). Created based on years of public input, it “considers past, present and future human and ecosystem riverhealth values to identify opportunities to correct historical degradation and prevent and mitigate against non-desirable future conditions” in our watershed. Specific management objectives of the plan include the protection of wildlife and biodiversity, the strengthening of land use planning and water usage, and the preservation of aesthetics, viewscales, and recreation land. Our local community is clear and unified in their values, and it is our job to advocate on behalf of our valley and the people who call this place home.

The use of federal resources to pave a currently seasonal road to access the Berlaimont development stands in direct contrast to the Community Water Plan by threatening wildlife, wildfire mitigation efforts, recreational viewscales and aesthetics, and water quantity. The road would direct up to 215 vehicle trips per day through winter habitat for deer and elk, populations that are already significantly smaller than historical levels. The construction of 19 multimillion dollar homes would not only interrupt the serenity of popular recreation trails, but in the event of a wildfire would create an undue burden on local responders, with a one-way road putting our firefighters at risk. The need to divert water from the river for these homes just as we are entering a severe drought is a threat to our future water supply. At a time when the US Forest Service is facing severe cuts to their budget and personnel, this development is an inefficient use of federal resources that does not serve the needs of the community or the forest ecosystem.

The paving of a road to access the Berlaimont development is *not* in line with the values of the Eagle County community or the Eagle River Coalition. We strongly encourage the legislature to represent the will of their constituents by adopting the Forest Resources Accountability Act.

Sincerely,

The Eagle River Coalition



**EAGLE RIVER
COALITION**

Contact: David Geddes
Phone: 970.827.5406 x 703
Email: geddes@eagleriverco.org
3/16/2026



Town of Eagle Town Council
200 Broadway, P.O. Box 609
Eagle, Colorado 81631

February 24, 2026

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

Dear Senator Bennet:

On behalf of the Town Council of Eagle, Colorado, we write to express our strong support for your Forest Resources Accountability Act and our opposition to the proposed Berlaimont Estates access road project to 19 luxury estates in the White River National Forest.

We agree with the concerns about the Forest Service's reduced staffing and capacity at a time when the agency is struggling to maintain trails, address wildfire risk, reduce hazardous fuels, and protect watersheds and wildlife habitat. Approving new year-round access to support residential development would also expand the wildland-urban interface and increase long-term federal firefighting obligations.

The White River National Forest is an important part of our Town's economy and way of life. Forest Service environmental analysis has identified risks associated with the Berlaimont access road, including fragmentation of important winter habitat for deer and elk, potential water quality impacts, and increased disturbance from expanded year-round human activity. We are concerned about diverting already very limited Forest Service resources from critical stewardship activities on the national forest, like wildfire mitigation and recreation management, to support a private, luxury project with well-documented impacts to our public lands.

For these reasons, the Town of Eagle opposes the Berlaimont development and associated road construction. Expanding permanent road infrastructure in designated winter range would place lasting pressure on public lands that support both regional ecosystems and local economic sustainability.

Your legislation appropriately prioritizes public benefit uses of National Forest lands while maintaining reasonable access to private inholdings. Limiting new permanent road construction in sensitive habitat, maintaining existing seasonal access, and encouraging voluntary acquisition of the parcel for conservation reflect a balanced approach to public lands stewardship.

Thank you for your continued leadership on issues that matter deeply to Eagle County and western Colorado. We appreciate your attention to this matter and stand ready to support your efforts as this legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,

Town of Eagle Town Council



Bryan Woods, Mayor

CC:

Jamie Woodworth Foral

Geoffrey Grimmer

Gina McCrackin

Scott Schreiner

Casey Glowacki

Andrew Atkins

March 11, 2026

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

Re: Forest Service Accountability Act

Dear Senator Bennet:

On behalf of the Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance (ESWA) I want to thank you for proposing the Forest Resources Accountability Act (the "Bill"). ESWA is a local all-volunteer nonprofit that works with the local Forest Service to preserve, protect, and maintain the four Wilderness Areas in Eagle and Summit Counties, Colorado.

As your Bill points out, the Forest Service doesn't have the staff or budget to perform its existing responsibilities, including maintaining our local Wilderness Areas. It makes no sense to have an under-staffed and under-funded agency spent time and money on the proposed private Berlaimont road. The road will only serve a handful of multi-millionaires and offers no public benefit.

The Berlaimont development would also force already under-funded and under-staffed local governments to spend precious dollars on firefighting and emergency services for a luxury development that provides no local benefit.

The new road needed to serve the Berlaimont development would also harm our local deer and elk herds that have used the property for centuries for critical winter habitat because of its south-facing aspect. Wildlife populations in the Eagle Valley are already plummeting and are barely holding.

For the above reasons, the local community has strongly opposed the proposed development for more than a decade. The project should not be allowed to move forward, especially since it will require the Forest Service to use its limited time and money on a project that offers no public benefit and will only further enrich a privileged few. The Berlaimont parcel already has seasonal access via an existing gravel road. The Forest Service's limited resources should be prioritized on work that benefits the general public not a privileged few.

Thank you for your leadership on this and many other important environmental issues.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Browning
ESWA Advocacy Committee Chair



Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance
PO Box 3986
Avon, CO 81620
www.vvmta.org

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Michael F. Bennet
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet,

On behalf of the Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance (VVMTA), I write in support of your amendment, Forest Resources Accountability Act, to stop a year round paved road to the Berlaimont parcel in the White River National Forest. Your legislation would require access to remain on routes already in existence and to be unpaved and seasonal, while preventing approval or funding for a year round road.

VVMTA has consistently opposed paving this road because of the direct and lasting impacts it would have on the Berry Creek trail system and the recreation experience in this deeply valued area for our community. As we stated in our prior objection, a paved year round road would fundamentally change recreation use by significantly shifting access patterns. The Berry Creek and Mesquite trail networks would move away from their current semi-backcountry character and toward a more front country recreation setting.

This concern is grounded in years of actual use data. Over the last five years, VVMTA has maintained trail counters on both the dirt road that would become paved and on the lower Berry Creek Trail. Those counters have averaged more than 47,800 counts annually. These are hikers, mountain bikers, dog walkers, trail runners, and other recreationalists whose experience would be significantly and negatively changed by paving this route. Our earlier objection also documented that Berry Creek was already heavily used and that even limited Forest Service counter data captured substantial traffic during a lower use period.

Just recently, I went for a trail run on Berry Creek Road (FS 774) during an unseasonably warm day and saw no fewer than twenty people out enjoying the unpaved road. There were families, mountain bikers, hikers, dog walkers, kids, and people of all ages. Every person I passed smiled, said hello, and was clearly enjoying the simple experience of being outside, exercising, socializing, and spending time in nature. As I ran, I could not help but wonder whether they knew that this experience and this joy are very likely to change. They may soon lose a relatively flat dirt road where they can comfortably walk side by side on an afternoon outing. I know I was



Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance
PO Box 3986
Avon, CO 81620
www.vvmta.org

thinking about how my own experience in the Berry Creek trail system may soon change forever.

That is what is at stake. The dirt road itself is already an important recreational segment. As VVMTA noted in its formal objection, hikers and dog walkers currently use this road specifically because it offers a low grade, soft surface experience, and lower FSR 774 already receives very heavy out and back use from dog walkers, short distance walkers with children, aging athletes, and cyclists. Once paved, that unpaved recreation experience would cease to exist and the alternative trail proposed by the Forest Service would not fulfill the experience and need.

Paving would also intensify pressure on the lower Berry Creek Trail. VVMTA previously warned that paved access would increase bike shuttling, increase pressure on lower Berry Creek trail sustainability, worsen user conflicts on this multi-use bi directional trail, and lead to more tread degradation and maintenance needs. We also noted that increased access would likely worsen the creation of unsanctioned routes and place still more stress on the system. Additionally, parking and access will become a major issue. Currently, parking on the shoulder of the unpaved road overflows on a daily basis. The parking area would not accommodate the needs and there is no overflow parking option.

For VVMTA, this issue is about protecting the integrity, character, and function of the Berry Creek trail system. We seek to preserve soft surface access, reduce user conflict, prevent avoidable trail degradation, and protect the experience of the many thousands of people who already rely on this area for close to home recreation. Senator Bennet's amendment is an important and necessary step to prevent long term harm to one of the Vail Valley's most important and popular trail systems.

Thank you for your leadership and for advancing legislation that protects public recreation and the Berry Creek trail system.

Sincerely,

Ernest Saeger
Executive Director
Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance