

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To prohibit a road construction project in the White River National Forest
in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BENNET introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To prohibit a road construction project in the White River
National Forest in the State of Colorado, and for other
purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Forest Resources Ac-
5 countability Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) Forest Service staffing decreased by 6,000
9 between January 20, 2025, and December 31, 2025;

1 (2) since January 20, 2025, the reduced staff-
2 ing of the Forest Service has resulted in—

3 (A) 40 percent less hazardous fuels reduc-
4 tion projects nationwide;

5 (B) 22 percent less trails maintenance
6 projects nationwide; and

7 (C) significant reductions to science and
8 research that inform Forest Service manage-
9 ment of timber, fire, recreation, wildlife, water,
10 and natural resources on the 193,000,000 acres
11 managed by the Forest Service; and

12 (3) with limited staffing resources, the Forest
13 Service must focus on projects that address public
14 needs, including—

15 (A) wildfire risk reduction;

16 (B) forest treatments that reduce insect
17 and disease infestation;

18 (C) improving recreation opportunities, in-
19 cluding trail maintenance and permitting recre-
20 ation trips;

21 (D) maintaining and improving drinking
22 water resources;

23 (E) sustaining healthy wildlife populations
24 and habitat; and

1 (F) ensuring scientifically sound steward-
2 ship of the health, diversity, and productivity of
3 United States forests and grasslands to meet
4 the needs of present and future generations.

5 **SEC. 3. PROHIBITION OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**
6 **IN THE WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST.**

7 (a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to pro-
8 tect critical winter wildlife habitat in the Federal land.

9 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land”
11 means sections 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30,
12 31, 32, and 33 of T. 4 S., R. 82 W in the White
13 River National Forest in the State of Colorado.

14 (2) PARCEL.—The term “parcel” means the
15 680-acre parcel described on page 1 of the record of
16 decision, known as the Berlaimont Estates parcel.

17 (3) RECORD OF DECISION.—The term “record
18 of decision” means the record of decision for the
19 Berlaimont Estates Access Road, dated March 2023.

20 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
21 the Secretary of Agriculture.

22 (c) ADEQUATE ACCESS.—In providing adequate ac-
23 cess to inholdings within the Federal land, the Secretary
24 shall only provide access to reasonable and necessary
25 routes that are—

1 (1) in existence as of the date of the record of
2 decision;

3 (2) unpaved;

4 (3) seasonal; and

5 (4) limited to specific uses set forth in a special
6 use permit that ensures the access remains subject
7 to enforceable terms and conditions that will protect
8 the National Forest System.

9 (d) PROHIBITION.—The Secretary shall not approve
10 or issue any easement, special use authorization, or other
11 authorization to open, improve, authorize, permit, con-
12 struct, plan, or otherwise consider any utility corridor or
13 year-round road described in the record of decision or any
14 substantially similar road access project on the Federal
15 land.

16 (e) ADDITIONAL PROHIBITIONS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—No Federal funds may be
18 used to open, improve, authorize, permit, construct,
19 plan, or otherwise consider any easement, special use
20 authorization, or other authorization allowing any
21 utility corridor or year-round road to be located on
22 the Federal land to access the parcel.

23 (2) EFFECT.—Nothing in this subsection pre-
24 vents the use, in accordance with applicable laws
25 and regulations, of any Forest Service road existing

1 on the date of enactment of this Act by the Forest
2 Service, any owner of the parcel, or the public.

3 (f) LAND ACQUISITION FROM WILLING SELLERS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—To the maximum extent
5 practicable, the Secretary shall acquire, through pur-
6 chase, exchange, or donation, from any willing seller,
7 the parcel.

8 (2) COORDINATION.—In carrying out para-
9 graph (1), the Secretary shall coordinate with the
10 State of Colorado, Eagle County, and local land
11 trusts to leverage non-Federal programs, authorities,
12 and resources in the efforts to acquire the parcel.

13 (3) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
14 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
15 shall submit a report describing the efforts of the
16 Secretary, the owner of the parcel, and the entities
17 described in paragraph (2) to—

18 (A) the Committee on Energy and Natural
19 Resources of the Senate; and

20 (B) the Committee on Natural Resources
21 of the House of Representatives.

22 (4) INCORPORATION OF LAND.—If the parcel is
23 acquired by the Secretary, the parcel shall be incor-
24 porated into the White River National Forest and
25 administered for the purposes of conservation of

- 1 wildlife and the enjoyment of present and future
- 2 generations.