

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 30, 2008

The Honorable Ed Schafer  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Gail Kimbell  
Chief of Forest Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Mark Rey  
Undersecretary of Natural Resources and  
Environment  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Bill Ritter  
Governor  
State of Colorado  
136 State Capitol  
Denver, CO 80203-1792

The Honorable Harris Sherman  
Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Natural Resources  
1313 Sherman St., Rm. 718  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear:

Ed Schafer, Secretary of Agriculture  
Mark Rey, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, USDA  
Gail Kimbell, Chief, Forest Service, USDA  
Bill Ritter, Governor of Colorado  
Harris Sherman, Executive Director, CO Department of Natural Resources

We are writing regarding the U.S. Forest Service's issuance of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and proposed Draft Rule regarding the management of Inventoried Roadless Areas in the national forests of Colorado, and the need to suspend this federal rulemaking process.

Determining the management of 4.4 million acres of national public lands in Colorado is a serious matter, and any precedent set here will affect all roadless areas and the Americans who enjoy them. We are concerned that the expedited timeline guiding Colorado's roadless rule fails to allow Americans adequate opportunity for participation and input. Additionally, we believe neither the planned federal process nor the associated documents adequately address the vital need to conserve roadless areas which include crucial wildlife habitat, clean water, clean air, recreation opportunities, and solitude.

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt established our national forest system to ensure America's natural heritage would be protected for future generations. A century later, these national forests still stand tall because Americans have continued to enthusiastically embrace conservation measures such as the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which protects more than

58.5 million acres of pristine national forests from most road-building and other industrial development – including 4.4 million acres of Colorado’s national forests.

As the administration’s tenure is nearing its end, there appears to be a rush to finalize policies while the opportunity is ripe, even if the process or the policies skirt adequate public scrutiny. These expedited processes seem to run contrary to the recent order of White House Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten who issued a June 1, 2008 moratorium on new proposed rules “except in extraordinary circumstances.” Repealing one of the nation’s most popular conservation policies and replacing it with one that offers far fewer protections hardly seems to qualify.

This accelerated approach also is in marked contrast to the development of the roadless rule, which was issued as a result of the most extensive federal rulemaking in history. The policy was promulgated after more than three years of deliberation and more than 600 public hearings and 1.6 million comments in favor of its protections. Since it was issued in 2001, more than 3 million additional Americans have voiced their support for this conservation policy which has provided balanced management to these public lands.

The rapid pace of development, particularly in the West, has put increased pressure on the national forest system. With a majority already open to logging, mining, and drilling, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was developed as a solution to the patchwork of regulations that have resulted in millions of acres of national forest land being lost. Management of Colorado’s national forest roadless areas deserve a thoughtful, open, and comprehensive discussion before any changes to current policies are considered. Given the permanent impacts that the Colorado roadless rule will have on the 4.4 million acres of backcountry national forests, and the overwhelming support in Colorado and across the nation for protection of our roadless forests, anything less may result in policies that offer less protection than what these natural treasures deserve and need.

Colorado’s national forests are a natural treasure that belongs to its citizens and to all Americans supporting outstanding ecological values and providing world-class recreation opportunities. A century of conservation should not be undone in haste. We therefore respectfully call on you to suspend your current efforts to repeal the Roadless Area Conservation Rule for Colorado and – in the tradition of President Theodore Roosevelt – ensure its national forests are protected for future generations to enjoy. Colorado and the American people deserve better.


Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



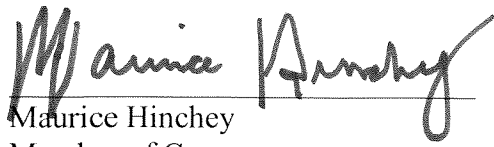
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Jay Inslee  
Member of Congress

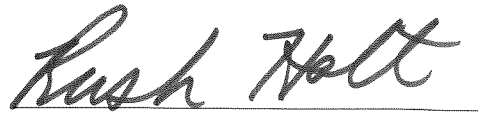


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Jim Ramstad  
Member of Congress



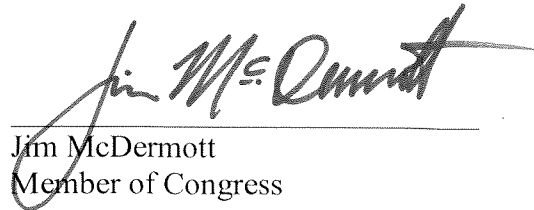
Maurice Hinchey  
Member of Congress



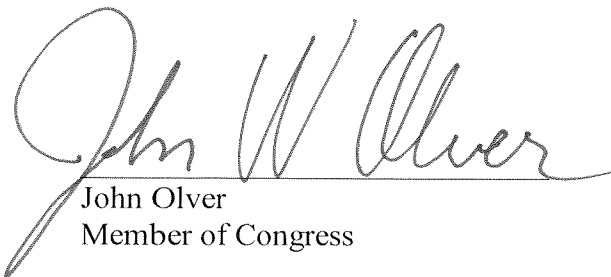
Rush Holt  
Member of Congress



Mark Kirk  
Member of Congress



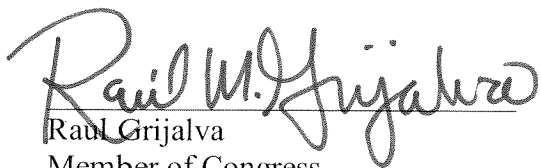
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



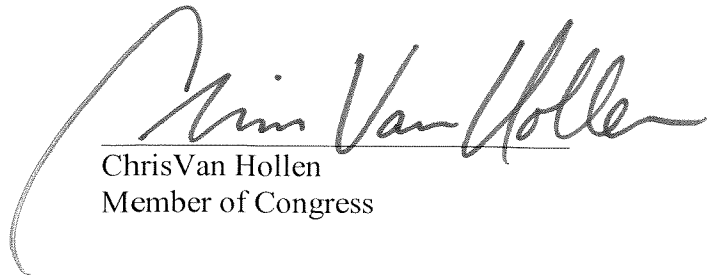
John Olver  
Member of Congress



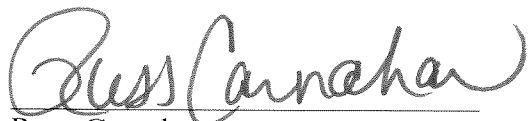
Hilda Solis  
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Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress




Russ Carnahan  
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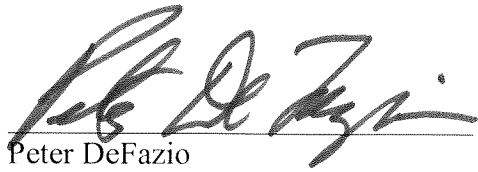
Michael Honda  
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Dennis Moore  
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Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



David Price  
Member of Congress



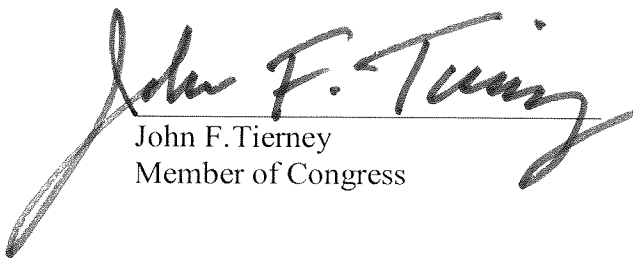
Henry Waxman  
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George Miller  
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Donald Payne  
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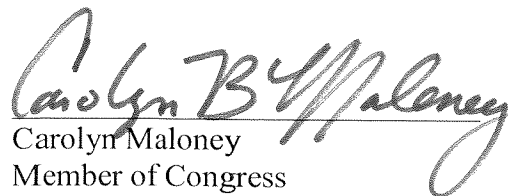
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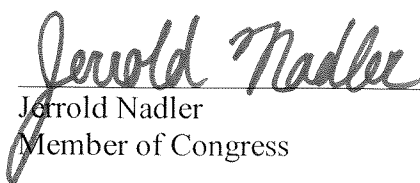
Lynn Woolsey  
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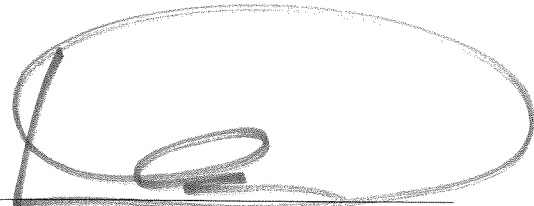
Earl Blumenauer  
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Carolyn Maloney  
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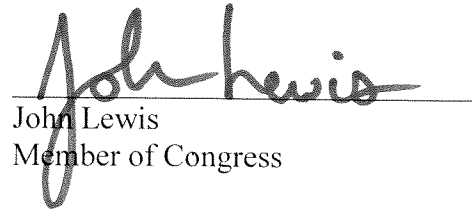
Jerrold Nadler  
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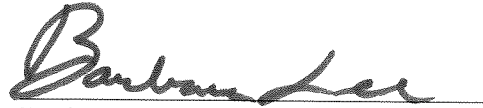
David Wu  
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Darlene Hooley  
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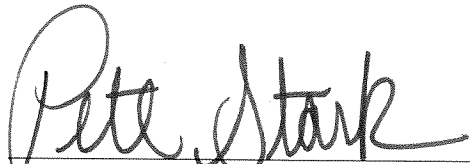
John Lewis  
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Barbara Lee  
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Tammy Baldwin  
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Pete Fortney Stark  
Member of Congress



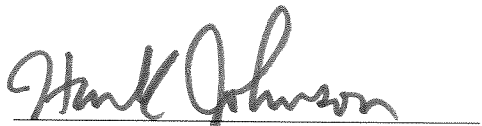
Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress



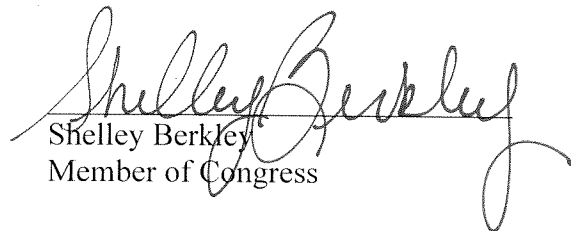
Betty McCollum  
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James P. Moran  
Member of Congress



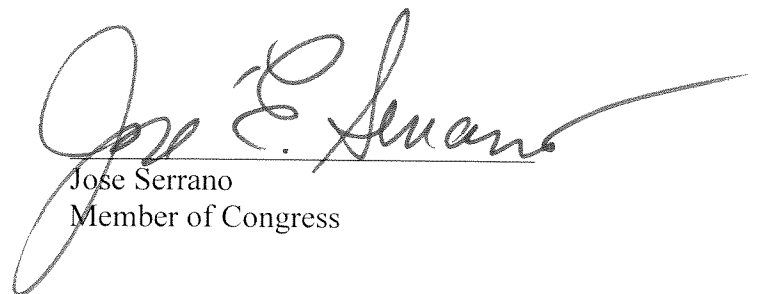
Hank Johnson  
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Shelley Berkley  
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Barney Frank  
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Jose Serrano  
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