

**Colorado Environmental Coalition • Colorado Mountain Club • Center for Native
Ecosystems • Colorado Wild • High Country Citizens Alliance • National Wildlife
Federation • San Juan Citizens Alliance • The Wilderness Society
Western Colorado Congress • Wilderness Workshop**

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Citizen groups respond to Colorado Governor Ritter's Roadless Petition

Governor Bill Ritter is expected to announce today that he will submit a revised version of a petition crafted by his predecessor for the management of national forest roadless areas in Colorado. In response, citizen groups working for protection of roadless areas, with a combined Colorado membership of 22,600, issued the following statement:

“We strongly support the complete protection of all of America's national forest roadless areas as provided by the 2001 national roadless rule

We therefore do not support a state-by-state petition process.

We agree with the governor that the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, currently the law of the land, is the best way to ensure the permanent protection of our roadless areas.

We believe that the governor's proposed back-up plan for Colorado's roadless areas, a separate Colorado-specific petition, is well intentioned but not necessary with the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule currently in place as the law of the land.

We will continue to defend the existing protections for all roadless areas provided by the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

More Coloradans – and more Americans – spoke out in favor of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule than any other environmental protection in our history. “

BACKGROUND

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule was issued in 2001, protecting nearly 60 million acres nationwide, of which 4.4 million acres are in the state of Colorado.

The Bush administration rescinded the 2001 and replaced it with a state-by-state petitioning process.

The Bush effort was subject to several lawsuits, including a case that was recently decided in California that reversed the Bush administration's process and reaffirmed the 2001 Rule.

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