



HOUSE RESOLUTION 01-1010

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Miller, Alexander, Berry, Cadman, Clapp, Crane, Dean, Decker, Fairbank, Fritz, Hefley, Hoppe, Kester, Larson, Lee, Nuñez, Paschall, Rhodes, Rippey, Schultheis, Sinclair, Smith, Snook, Spradley, Stafford, Swenson, Webster, and Young.

CONCERNING ROADLESS AREAS IN COLORADO.

WHEREAS, On October 13, 1999, President Clinton directed the U.S. Forest Service to develop and propose for public comment regulations that would place long-term restrictions on currently inventoried Roadless Areas, which resulted in an additional 4.433 million acres of Colorado Roadless Areas receiving protected status; and

WHEREAS, During the public comment period the Forest Service failed to provide sufficient information, including maps identifying areas which would be subject to the rule, on which potentially affected parties could base their comments; and

WHEREAS, The Forest Service failed to provide the public with quantifiable costs and benefits of the alternatives presented during the public comment period; and

WHEREAS, During the public comment period, Forest Service officials stated that no changes to the boundaries would be considered by that agency; and

WHEREAS, The State of Colorado and local governments within the State did not have adequate information or time in which to assess the impacts from the designation of roadless areas within their communities prior to the close of the public comment period; and

WHEREAS, Arguments were presented during public comment which raised the possibility that the Roadless Area regulation was developed in violation of the Federal Advisory Committee Act; and

WHEREAS, The final rule, issued January 12, 2001, prohibits road construction and reconstruction activities (including temporary road construction) and timber harvests except for stewardship purposes in designated Roadless Areas; and

WHEREAS, The state of Colorado is home to some of the best quality coal in the United States as well as valuable deposits of oil and gas; and

WHEREAS, This bituminous coal has very high heat content, very low sulfur, produces less nitrogen oxides than other coals, and is a desirable resource for the nation's utility companies; and

WHEREAS, This coal serves to meet our nation's stringent environmental requirements to protect air quality and human health; and

WHEREAS, Oil and gas deposits on Forest Service lands may aid in reducing the extraordinarily high costs of home heating and transportation fuels, as well as reducing reliance on foreign oil; and

WHEREAS, Certain rural areas of Colorado are reliant upon the extractive minerals industry for high-paying direct jobs and to support secondary businesses and industries; and

WHEREAS, Oil and gas exploration and development would be prohibited by roadless area designation; and

WHEREAS, The preamble to the "Roadless Area" final rule states that "Between 308 and 1,371 million tons of coal resources on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison [Colorado] and Manti-LaSal [Utah] National Forests could be unavailable for development as a result of this rule"; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-third General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

That we urge the Colorado Congressional delegation, the President of the United States, the Governor's Office, and relevant state agencies to oppose the designation of 4.433 million acres in Colorado as Roadless Areas and use all means within their power, including litigation, to either overturn the rule or to allow for discretionary mineral leasing.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this resolution be sent to each member of Colorado's Congressional delegation, President George W. Bush, Governor Bill Owens, and the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

Judith Rodrigue
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Doug Dean
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES