

May 20, 2022

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

We the undersigned groups are writing to express our strong support for the draft Gunnison Outdoor Resources Protection (GORP) Act. From the time in 2012 when you spoke with community members on the banks of the Slate River until now, the Gunnison Public Lands Initiative (GPLI) groups have engaged in numerous discussions about how best to manage public lands in Gunnison county for the benefit of the broad array of local and regional interests.

As you know, these discussions were based on principals of transparency, respect for diverse sets of values, and a spirit of compromise, so that the benefits of the proposal would accrue to all. You and your staff, along with Gunnison County officials, were integral to this process, encouraging cooperation and consensus building through years of detailed discussions, which culminated first in a set of draft legislative recommendations released in 2017. This was shared broadly within the community and region for input and comment from stakeholders and the public. Many of these comments were incorporated into a new report and updated recommendations released in 2019.

Your staff then began drafting legislation based on the 2019 recommendations; including designation of several wilderness areas and additions to existing wilderness, as well as several varieties of special management areas; with regular consultation with the GPLI groups members to ensure that draft legislation would accurately reflect the 2019 proposal. You showed a deep level of respect for the community consensus developed over the many years of stakeholder discussions, which we believe is reflected in the legislative draft in its current form. We commend you for this.

Several areas remain under discussion for possible inclusion in the legislation as it proceeds from draft to final form – we commit to finishing these discussions as soon as feasible, and to keep your office constantly updated as to the progress of such.

We thank you for your commitment to the GPLI process and its recommendations as reflected in the draft GORP Act. After the appropriate vetting by your office, we encourage you to proceed from draft legislation to introduction in the Senate, and we pledge to work with you throughout to see it ultimately enacted into law.

Sincerely,



Steven Guerrieri
Gunnison County Stockgrowers Association



Tim Kugler
Gunnison Trails



Matt Reed
High Country Conservation Advocates



Terry Peterson
Gunnison County Sno-Trackers



Ben Breslauer
Gunnison O.H.V. Alliance of Trailriders



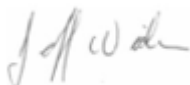
Dave Ochs
Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association



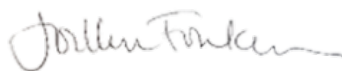
Kevin Alexander
Trout Unlimited



Tony Prendergast
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers



Jeff Widen
The Wilderness Society



Joellen Fonken
Upper Gunnison River Water
Conservancy District