



The Mountain Pact

Greg Larson
BLM District Manager
Attn: Supplemental EIS
2518 H Road, Grand Junction, CO 81506

CC: Doug Vilsack
BLM Colorado State Director
PO Box 151029
Lakewood, CO 80215

Senator Michael Bennet, Senator John Hickenlooper, Representative Joe Neguse

Dear Mr. Larsen,

The below listed local elected officials, who represent communities within the Colorado River Valley and Grand Junction Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Field Offices, are writing to urge adoption of the management proposed in Alternative F of the [draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement \(SEIS\)](#), which provides a more balanced approach to public lands management for the region. Doing so will protect some of our communities' critical water resources, Indigenous cultural sites, important wildlife habitat, and treasured recreation areas.

Many of the BLM lands located in our region are favorites for visitors and residents alike for camping, fishing, mountain biking, and hiking. Yet, many of these areas were left open to oil and gas leasing in the previous Resource Management Plans for the Colorado River Valley and Grand Junction Field Offices. We applaud the BLM for listening to the voices of our communities during the scoping portion of this process and developing [Alternative E](#), which proposes closing lands with no, low, and medium oil and gas potential in addition to other high value recreation and conservation lands like Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Special Recreation Management Areas to new oil and gas development, while simultaneously proposing important new conservation protections for wildlands and wildlife.

Some examples of special areas that Alternative F proposes closing to oil and gas that should be incorporated into the final plan include:

- The Grand Hogback
- Red Hill
- The Crown
- Thompson Creek
- Lower Dolores River canyons
- The Book Cliffs
- The North Fruita Desert
- The Upper Colorado River corridor

While the BLM completes a more thorough analysis of the impacts of federal oil and gas development on our climate and communities, we urge you to consider that [fossil fuel extraction on public lands generates nearly 25 percent of the United States' climate change causing emissions](#). Increasing conservation on our public lands is a critical tool for climate mitigation and adaptation for our region. Protected public lands provide essential core habitat and migration corridors that enable wildlife species and entire ecosystems to survive and thrive. The Biden-Harris administration has established

an ambitious goal to conserve 30% of our nation's lands and waters by 2030 in order to safeguard biodiversity against the threat of climate change, and this planning process can be a key piece for Colorado.

Alternative F most effectively scales down climate pollution, while scaling up conservation by designating new Areas of Critical Environmental Conservation and protecting additional Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. It also proposes the expansion of the Castle Peak Wilderness Study Area in Eagle County. We are supportive of these management considerations, and ask the BLM to consider designating additional Wilderness Study Areas as appropriate for wilderness quality lands in the planning area.

By adopting the management proposed in Alternative F, the Bureau of Land Management has an opportunity to embrace the America the Beautiful initiative and help conserve and restore more of our nation's lands and waters for residents, wildlife, and future generations. Limiting oil and gas development on BLM lands, identifying and protecting additional Lands with Wilderness Characteristics as well as increasing the designations of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) is essential to providing continued opportunities for outdoor recreation, equitable access to nature, and ultimately safeguarding the climate.

As the largest land manager in the nation, the Bureau of Land Management must play a leading role in protecting our public lands for the future. [71% of Coloradans “prefer that leaders place more emphasis on protecting water, air, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities over maximizing the amount of land available for drilling and mining.”](#)

Protected public lands are tremendous assets to Western Colorado communities. They play a critical role in our way of life. They help make the communities where we live what they are, while contributing to a healthier and better tomorrow for future generations. Alternative F provides the best path forward for lands under the management of the Colorado River Valley and Grand Junction Field Offices to support our outdoor recreation economy, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and preserve nature.

Sincerely,

Mayor Torre, City of Aspen, Colorado

Mayor Pro-Tem John Doyle, City of Aspen, Colorado

Council Member Sam Rose, City of Aspen, Colorado

Former Mayor Sarah Smith-Hymes, Town of Avon, Colorado

Mayor Bill Kane, Town of Basalt, Colorado

Mayor Pro Tem David Knight, Town of Basalt, Colorado

Council Member Angela Anderson, Town of Basalt, Colorado

Council Member Glenn Drummond, Town of Basalt, Colorado

Council Member Elyse Hottel, Town of Basalt, Colorado

Council Member Dieter Schindler, Town of Basalt, Colorado

Council Member Ryan Slack, Town of Basalt, Colorado

Mayor Ben Bohmfalk, Town of Carbondale, Colorado

Town Trustee Colin Laird, Town of Carbondale, Colorado

Chair of the Board of Commissioners Kathy Chandler-Henry, Eagle County, Colorado

Council Member Geoff Grimmer, Town of Eagle, Colorado

Mayor Ingrid Wussow, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado

Council Member and former Mayor Jonathan Godes, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado

Council Member Scott Beilfuss, City of Grand Junction, Colorado

Council Member Randall Reitz, City of Grand Junction, Colorado

Council Member Caitlin Carey, Town of New Castle, Colorado

County Commissioner Francie Jacober, Pitkin County, Colorado

County Commissioner Greg Poschman, Pitkin County, Colorado

County Commissioner Patti Clapper, Pitkin County, Colorado

County Commissioner Kelly McNicholas Kury, Pitkin County, Colorado

County Commissioner Steve Child, Pitkin County, Colorado

Council Member Sean Strode, City of Rifle, Colorado