

TELLURIDE DAILY PLANET

It's time to pass the CORE Act

March 31, 2021

DEAR EDITOR:

For more than a decade, the Town of the Ridgway has enthusiastically supported preserving the San Juan Mountains and other lands across our beautiful state that will be protected by the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. This legislation will protect over 400,000 acres of public land by creating new wilderness, recreation and conservation areas, and safeguard existing recreation opportunities, all while growing Colorado's vital outdoor recreation economy.

Earlier this year, Colorado senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper, as well as Representative Joe Neguse reintroduced the bill, which was cosponsored by Colorado representatives DeGette, Perlmutter and Crow. In late February, the House of Representatives passed it for the third time.

The bill enjoys broad support from all of the counties with lands in the bill, as well as well over 100 elected officials. Locally, the bill is supported by San Miguel, Ouray and San Juan county commissioners, and council members and mayors of Ridgway, Telluride, Mountain Village, Silverton and Ophir.

The support doesn't end there. The 2020 Conservation in the West poll found about two-thirds of voters surveyed support the legislation, and 81 percent say that they look at the issues of clean

water, clean air, wildlife and public lands when deciding whether to support an elected official. Ranchers, veterans, sportsmen and women, conservationists, private landowners, recreation groups, and over 150 Colorado businesses support the bill.

The CORE Act would also accomplish what many veterans have long been calling for — the designation of Camp Hale as our nation’s first national historic landscape. This is where the 10th Mountain Division trained to fight in the Italian Alps during World War II, and whose veterans were instrumental in the founding of Colorado’s ski industry and the modern outdoor recreation economy. As the son-in-law of a veteran of the 10th Mountain Division, I strongly support the creation of the first-ever Camp Hale National Historic Landscape.

From boosting our outdoor economy, to protecting our critical water resources and wildlife habitat, to conserving some of our wildest public lands which will help in the fight against climate change while putting us on a path to conserving 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030, the CORE Act is a collaborative effort that brings some of the best ideas and input from across the state into one piece of legislation. I thank senators Bennet and Hickenlooper and Representative Neguse for their strong support for this bill and urge the Senate to stand with them and ensure that it passes.

Mayor John I. Clark

Ridgway