



**Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners**

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September 21, 2010

Honorable John Salazar  
225 North 5th Street, Suite #702  
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Dear Congressman Salazar,

The Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners supports the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act as it pertains to lands within Gunnison County. We have no position on affected lands outside of our County.

We recognize that the proposed legislation involves only public lands and does not affect any existing uses or rights, including current natural gas leases. In addition, the proposed legislation is widely supported for its habitat and wildlife protection. Of the total acreage involved, only 23% is in Gunnison County and, of that total, 54% is already leased; therefore, approximately 10.5% of the total acreage being withdrawn is in Gunnison County. We acknowledge the gas industry's concerns, but feel that within Gunnison County their existing leases allow them more than adequate protection for extraction should they pursue their rights.

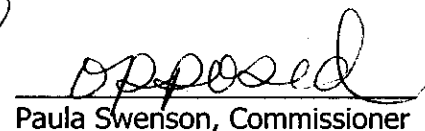
We also recognize that there is a delicate balance between the need to extract this important resource and the need to protect our vibrant tourism economy, including the much visited West Elk Loop Scenic Byway. We believe that this proposed withdrawal, in balance, is in the best interests of our citizens and visitors.

We encourage you to move this legislation concerning lands within Gunnison County forward as soon as possible, and we thank you for your commitment to public land protection.

Sincerely,

  
Jim Starr, Chairperson

  
Hap Channell, Commissioner

  
Paula Swenson, Commissioner

cc: Senator Mark Udall  
Senator Michael Bennet