

Date submitted (UTC): 5/20/2015 11:19:15 PM  
First name: Rose  
Last name: Pugliese  
Organization: Mesa County Board of Commissioners  
Title: Commissioner  
Official Representative/Member Indicator: Elected Official  
Address1: 544 Rood Avenue  
Address2:  
City: Grand Junction  
State:  
Province/Region:  
Zip/Postal Code: 81501  
Country: United States  
Email: mcadmin@mesacounty.us  
Phone: 9702441885  
Comments:  
May 20, 2015

Dan McCusker, Acting Deputy Regional Forester for Operations  
U.S. Forest Service  
Rocky Mountain Region  
Colorado Roadless Rule  
740 Simms Street  
Golden, CO 80401

VIA Email dmccusker@fs.fed.us

RE: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) on Colorado Roadless Rule exception for North Fork Coal Mining Area

Dear Mr. McCusker,

The Mesa County Board of Commissioners strongly supports the reinstatements of the North Fork Coal Mining Area (NFCMA) exception of the Colorado Roadless Rule (CRR).

Coal mining is an important industry for western Colorado, and regulatory impacts on it directly affect Mesa County, our economy, workforce, and residents.

The NFCMA exception was developed following a lengthy and deliberate process that took into account all of the relevant factors, and formed an integral part of the CRR. Reinstating the exception would reflect the time and resources that went into developing the overall CRR, as well as the spirit and intent of the process.

In addition, we request that the SDEIS fully take into account the socio-economic impacts of coal mining in the area. This industry creates several hundred jobs directly, and many more indirectly through the stimulation of general economic growth. As an economic and commercial hub for the region, Mesa County experiences the benefits of this development.

Unfortunately, recent mining job losses have had a severe and negative impact on the region's economy. A variety of factors, including state and federal regulatory pressure, obstructive legal action from special interest groups, and unwise court rulings have resulted in a loss of jobs, incomes, workforce and revenue for our region. Failure to reinstate the CRR exception would be an additional devastating blow to the people and economy of western Colorado.

North Fork coal is among the cleanest in the nation, and forms a crucial component of our state's energy mix. This resource is critical to helping keep energy prices affordable for our county's families and small businesses. Reinstating the NFCMA exception is essential to allowing local coal mines to expand and continue producing this valuable, clean, and safe energy source.

Sincerely,

Mesa County Board of Commissioners

Rose Pugliese, Chair, Board of Commissioners

John Justman, Commissioner

Scott McInnis, Commissioner