



January 15, 2016

Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

**Re: U.S. Forest Service Proposal to Reinstate the Colorado Roadless Rule North Fork Coal Exception, Otherwise Known as the “Arch Coal Loophole”**

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

WildEarth Guardians writes to urge you and the U.S. Forest Service (“USFS”) to abandon plans to restore the North Fork Coal Exception to the Colorado Roadless Rule. *See* 80 Fed. Reg. 81494 (Dec. 30, 2015).

Attached to this comment letter is a petition signed by more than 6,000 people calling on the USFS to stop moving forward to lift protections on roadless lands in Colorado in order to allow a single, bankrupt coal company, Arch Coal, to undermine our National Forests. We echo concerns of these thousands of people. At a time when our nation is endeavoring to limit carbon emissions, it is shocking that the USFS would move to lift protections on otherwise undeveloped National Forest lands in order to allow more coal to be mined and burned. It is even more shocking that the USFS is proceeding with implement this loophole as it would benefit only a single coal company, Arch Coal, which this week declared bankruptcy. It is an affront to the public trust that the USFS would even consider sacrificing our public lands and our climate only to allow a coal company to profit. Your efforts should be abandoned.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Nichols  
Climate and Energy Program Director  
WildEarth Guardians  
1536 Wynkoop, Suite 310  
Denver, CO 80202  
(303) 437-7663  
[jnichols@wildearthguardians.org](mailto:jnichols@wildearthguardians.org)