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I am writing to ask you consider exempting the North Fork Coal Mining Area from the Colorado Roadless Rule. The exemption is important for several reasons.

The local mining companies are very concerned about the environment. The companies have been diligent in the reclamation of the land.

The deficiencies identified by the District Court have been addressed. The North Fork Coal is a clean burning coal.

The area involved is not used for agriculture or housing.

The closing of the mines has created a tax burden for Delta, Gunnison and other surrounding counties. It has greatly impacted the economy of this area. Families have been forced to move. It has not only impacted mining families, but also school and businesses. The layoff of over 400 miners has caused businesses to close and schools to cut staff.

Utility bills have increased.

The mines have been a stable income for many years when farmers and rancher have been affected by weather and declining prices.

Please take these things into consideration when ruling on the Roadless area.

Shirley Cotton