February 19, 2021

**OPPOSE ANTI-ENVIRONMENTAL Amendments to H.R. 803 - Colorado Wilderness Act of 2021 [Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act]**

Dear Representative[Rules Committee Members and Staff, Rep. Grijalva, Speaker Pelosi],

*On behalf of our members and supporters across the country, we urge you to oppose the anti-environmental amendments (listed below) to H.R. 803 - Colorado Wilderness Act of 2021 [Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act], which threaten our air, water, lands, wildlife and climate by attempting to: (a) subvert the very purposes underlying Wilderness designations in relation to forest ecosystems; (b) supplant the power of Congress to protect America’s Wilderness and public lands by giving agencies or local entities veto power over such designations; or (c) improperly modify by explanation Acts of Congress which speak for themselves. H.R. 803 by its very name seeks to protect wilderness areas and public lands; as such it would be wholly inappropriate to accept amendments to this bill which would threaten the very environment that has been identified for protection.*

*As of 1 p.m. Eastern on Friday February 19, 2021, 57 on-time and 4 late amendments to H.R. 803 have been proposed.* ***We urge you to strongly oppose the amendments listed below.***  *All organizations listed above may not work on or have expertise in every amendment included.***Oppose****Amendments that would perpetuate environmental harm by: subverting the purpose of H.R. 803, which is to protect wilderness and public lands in designated areas; supplant the power of Congress to pursue such protections; or improperly modify by explanation Acts of Congress which speak for themselves:**

**Tiffany #3**: Standardizes the definition of renewable biomass across federal agencies for trees and tree residues such as sawdust, wood chips, shavings, bark, and other residual materials derived from federal and non-federal lands.
 *A special note on the Tiffany #3 Amendment: This Amendment would establish eligibility under the Renewable Fuels Standard for several broad classes of forest-derived biomass by wholly broadening the definition of “renewable biomass.” This would allow for trees to be cut and burned for energy under RFS, a practice which exacerbates the climate crisis by removing the trees we need to store and sequester carbon and then incinerating them in a process which burns dirtier than coal. What this amendment would allow is directly contrary to established carbon science, including the recommendations of EPA’s science advisors, and is overly broad and permissive, incentivizing misguided logging of forests that will decrease carbon stocks, increase atmospheric emissions, and increase the risks of wildfire risk while harming biodiversity and increasing pollution in environmental justice communities. In addition, this amendment flies in the face of the best available science on this issue, and therefore is counter to the Biden administration’s plans for addressing climate change.*

**Moore #5**: States that no wilderness or potential wilderness designation under this Act shall be effective in any county where the county has not formally approved such designation.

**Moore #6**: States that no land included in this Act may be designated as wilderness if (1) it is currently classified as being at high or extreme risk of wildfire; (2) its forests have an active beetle infestation; (3) it is forested by non-native or invasive species; (4) it has a forest stand density that results in excessive competition mortality of native tree species; or (5) it has a forest stand quality that does not comply with a preexisting forest plan.
 *A special note on the Moore #6 Amendment: Fire and native bark beetles are natural processes in our forest ecosystems and dead trees are essential to forest ecosystem function and biodiversity. Protection of these natural processes and how they shape the land is exactly what the Wilderness Act is designed to ensure, and it is these processes which maintain our forests’s resilience and the highest levels of biodiversity.*

**Moore #7**: States that nothing in this Act shall restrict, preclude, or prohibit any outdoor recreational activity that previously occurred on lands and waters being designated as wilderness or potential wilderness under this Act.

**Stauber #10**: Requires approval of local counties before mineral withdrawal can take place.

**Stauber #11**: States that this Act shall not apply to any lands or waters in Colorado's Third and Fifth Congressional Districts or any lands, waters, or minerals in Arizona's Fourth Congressional District.

**Stauber #12**: States that this Act shall not apply to any lands or waters in Colorado's Third Congressional District.

**Boebert #16**: Adds the Colorado Recreation and Jobs Protection Act, which requires the headquarters for the Bureau of Land Management to remain located in Grand Junction, Colorado.

**Boebert #17**: Releases all Wilderness Study Areas in Colorado that are not included in this Act.

**Boebert #18**: Nullifies section 216 of Executive Order 14008 which provides authorization for the 30x30 program and prevents funding for similar programs.

**Boebert #19**: Requires approval by affected counties for wilderness or potential wilderness designations in this Act to take effect.

**Boebert #20**: Prohibits any wilderness designations under Title 1 on federal lands burned by a wildfire of 10,000 acres or more in the last 10 years.

 *A special note on the Boebert #20 Amendment: Wildfire is a natural process that ensures the resilience and biodiversity of our forest ecosystem. Fire has been in our native ecosystems for over 300 million years. There is no scientific or rational basis for excluding such areas from being designated as wilderness.*

**Panetta #21**: Stipulates that nothing in this Act may be construed to limit the authority of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture under section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act to manage for fire, insects, and diseases in wilderness areas designated.

**Herrell #26**: Strikes all "Potential Wilderness" designations in the bill.

**Gosar #27**: Excludes lands in the 4th Congressional District of Arizona from the permanent mineral withdrawal under this Act.

**LaMalfa #30**: Clarifies that this Act does not affect the ability of the Forest Service to conduct vegetation management activities.

**Rosendale #33**: Establishes a five-year sunset to release all designated or proposed wilderness study areas under this Act.

**Schweikert #34**: States that nothing in this Act shall prohibit renewable energy development or associated transmission lines and rights-of-way.

**Rosendale #36**: States that no land included in this Act may be designated as wilderness or potential wilderness in a wildland-urban interface that is currently classified as high or extreme risk of wildfire.

**Rosendale #37**: Adds the Forest Information Reform Act to the bill, which allows the Forest Service to incorporate new information into their existing plans as it comes to fruition instead of striking the plan and starting from scratch. Allows Forest Service projects to be completed in a more timely manner, providing greater flexibility but still requiring them to go through the regular NEPA process.

**Fulcher #42**: Allows the relevant County Commissioners to petition the relevant Secretary to perform certain necessary activities as neighboring communities to Wilderness Study Areas or Wildness Areas.

**Lamborn #43**: States that the wilderness and potential wilderness designations in this Act shall not go into effect unless the study under subsection (a) finds that wilderness designations in the Western United States would not negatively impact the readiness of the Armed Forces of the United States with respect to aviation training.

**Westerman #45**: Allows the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior to exempt any wilderness or potential wilderness designated under this Act that does not meet the definition of wilderness under the Wilderness Act.

**Westerman #46**: Allows the Secretary of Agriculture of the Secretary of the Interior to exempt lands from being designated as wilderness under this Act that are at high risk of wildfire.

**Westerman #48**: Allows the Secretary of Agriculture or the Interior to make minor modifications to exterior boundaries of designated lands to create 150 feet of distance between the exterior boundary and recreation trails.

**Hern #53**: States that this Act shall be effective on the date on which the Department of Defense transmits to Congress an analysis of the impact of the withdrawal under section 802 on the national security interests of the United States.

**Newhouse #54**: States that nothing in this Act shall prohibit development of new renewable hydroelectric energy and associated transmission lines and rights of way within the wild and scenic designations, wilderness designations, or wilderness study area designations under this Act.

**Boebert #56**: Releases Wilderness Study Areas not designated in this bill in Arizona, California, Colorado, and Washington that were first designated for study in 1976.

**Westerman #58**: (Late) States that nothing in this Act shall prohibit hunters from using non-motorized carts to transport harvests and gear into any wilderness area or wilderness study areas under the Act.

**Westerman #59**: (Late) States that nothing in this Act shall prohibit anglers from using non-motorized carts to transport canoes, kayaks, or fishing gear into any wilderness or wilderness study area designated under the Act.

**Boebert #60**: (Late Revised) Prevents the bill from taking effect until the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, certifies that the withdrawal will not adversely affect jobs available to Native Americans, other minorities, and women.