



REGION 8

DENVER, CO 80202

August 12, 2026

Carlos Gonzales
Rio Grande National Forest
U.S. Forest Service 1803 W. Highway 160 Monte Vista, CO 81144
Transmitted electronically

Dear Carlos Gonzales:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 has reviewed the U.S. Forest Service's June 2026 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Over-Snow Travel Management Project (CEQ #20260071) within the Rio Grande National Forest in accordance with Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). The CAA Section 309 role is unique to the EPA. It requires EPA to review and comment on the environmental impact of any proposed Federal action subject to NEPA's EIS requirements and to make the EPA's comments public.

The Rio Grande National Forest is planning to complete a travel management plan for over-snow motorized vehicles across approximately 1,382,276 acres (75 percent) of Rio Grande National Forest lands. The project is expected to result in an Over-Snow Vehicle Use Map and a Winter Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Map that delineates the planning area using designations that allow for differing levels of over-snow vehicle use.

CAA Regional Haze Rule (CAA §169A, 42 U.S.C. § 7491):

In Chapter 1 of the Draft EIS, the USFS identifies air quality impacts from motorized over-snow vehicle use as a "significant issue related to the project" (Issue #5, p. 25), however, the Draft EIS does not appear to provide baseline information on the airshed or an air quality impact analysis.

- Due to the project's intersection with the Class I airsheds for the La Garita and Weminuche Wilderness Areas protected under CAA §169A, 42 U.S.C. § 74911, EPA has identified that the Draft EIS would benefit from incorporating an air quality impact analysis which considers impacts to nearby class one areas in the Final EIS.

The EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the Draft EIS. If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Gleason, Acting NEPA Branch Manager at gleason.carolyn@epa.gov or 303-312-6641. The Region 8 NEPA Branch can also be reached at EPA-R8-NEPA@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

DANIEL
HEFFERNAN

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Daniel Heffernan
Associate Deputy Regional Administrator
U.S. EPA Region 8