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Comments:

The Forest Service and BLM should recognize that hunting, fishing, ranching, and recreation in the Thompson Divide area support nearly 300 jobs and \$30 million in annual economic output for local communities. These sustainable uses should be prioritized over the destructive practices of mining and fossil fuel extraction on our publicly owned lands.

The Forest Service and BLM should close the Thompson Divide area to oil and gas leasing and mining for at least 20 years. The proposed Mineral Withdrawal would protect 225,000 acres of public lands from future oil and gas leasing, as well as mining. Benefits to air quality, wildlife habitat, watersheds, wilderness corridors, and our climate would be immediate and worthwhile.

This land is pristine and precious to Colorado and important to its future. It should be cherished and protected for all of us and for our children and grandchildren. The 20 year ban should be enacted as part of our critical path away from fossil fuels, and to protect the quality of life for all nearby residents and to conserve the area for future generations.