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Comments: I am submitting comments from Californians for Western Wilderness (CalUWild), a citizens organization with nearly 900 members and supporters. We are dedicated to encouraging and facilitating participation in legislative and administrative actions affecting wilderness and other public lands in the West. Our members use and enjoy the public lands in Colorado and all over the West.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment and finding of no significant impact for the proposed Thompson Divide Withdrawal Project.

We fully support the proposed administrative withdrawal.

Many individuals and organizations, including CalUWild, have long supported protection for the Thompson Divide. We appreciate that the Draft recognizes the great value of the area to conservationists and recreationists of all stripes, and other users such as ranchers. This is especially true when viewed in comparison to the relatively small mineral value the landscape holds.

Recreation is only one of the values that Thompson Divide holds that is worthy of protection. It provides important linkage between known wildlife habitats, allowing for uninterrupted migration for many species. The Thompson Divide is an important watershed, providing clean water to local users.

All of these play an important role in supporting the ecosystem and fostering the local economy at the same time.

We look forward to the Thompson Divide withdrawal being finalized and again thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please inform us of your decision in this matter and please also inform us of further opportunities to be involved in your public decision-making processes.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Painter, Coordinator