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To the U.S. Forest Service

You must protect our roadless areas in the WRNF and the Thompson Divide from oil and gas drilling. Oil and gas activities threaten our air, water, natural areas, and valuable wildlife habitat.

The drinking water for local communities is a big concern, we can not allow it to be ruined by extraction processes in our forest.

We must keep the forest from becoming fragmented; an issue that is so important for our local wildlife and our hunting economy.

The Thompson Divide, in its entirety, should be unavailable for oil and gas leasing because of the area's importance to local people and communities in its current, undeveloped, and unfragmented state. The area provides clean water, grazing lands, wildlife habitat, and countless recreational opportunities to people near and far. Such opportunities would be severely impacted by future drilling in the area.

In addition, the Forest Service must require the highest level of air pollution controls to protect the clean air for the forest, nearby communities, and natural wonders in the area like the world-famous Maroon Bells. Many local airsheds are Class I airsheds, meaning that they are managed to the highest standard and management agencies have an obligation to prevent degradation.

The White River National Forest has many other uses than oil and gas extraction; such as water production, recreation, tourism, and wildland values.

I support Alternative B, which places nearly 1.5 million acres off limits to leasing, while the other alternatives would leave open at least a quarter of a million acres for future oil and gas leasing. If future leasing is allowed, any development should be restricted to areas that are already disturbed, and surface occupancy should be prohibited anywhere on the forest that is not already developed.

Please protect the beautiful White River National Forest. Western Colorado is doing its part!

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