



September 13, 2005

The Honorable Bill Owens
Office of the Governor
136 State Capitol
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Owens:

I am writing on behalf of the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) to express our support for the continued protection of Colorado's roadless lands and the immense recreational opportunities and economic impact they bring to your state.

OIA is a national trade association whose mission is to ensure the growth and success of the outdoor industry and the promotion of quality outdoor recreation experiences for the American public. The outdoor industry is made up of more than 4000 businesses with 500,000 employees in all 50 states, generating more than \$20 billion in retail sales every year. Our members include recognized brands and speciality stores such as Nike, Eagle Creek, Patagonia, the North Face, REI and EMS. Last year, 159 million Americans participated in active outdoor recreation on public lands.

As the voice of the outdoor industry, we work to promote outdoor recreation and to ensure that wild recreation qualities are protected.

As you know, Coloradoans are an outdoor-oriented people who spend much of their free time enjoying their national forests. In addition, Colorado's forests and recreation opportunities attract millions of visitors every year. Colorado's economy and OIA's members depend on American's continued participation in recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, snowshoeing, horseback riding and mountain climbing, all of which occur in Colorado's national forests.

OIA has been actively involved in the roadless rule process since the rule's inception. We continue to serve as a member of the Forest Roads Working Group, which assembled a range of organization to advise the U.S. Department of Agriculture on implementing a workable and effective roadless rule.

Hundreds of OIA's member companies have provided comments to the USDA throughout the process. And nearly 10,000 participants in outdoor recreation activities sent postcards to the USDA in support of roadless areas.

Now that the focus has shifted to the states, we offer our research and assistance to you as you weigh in on the management of forests in Colorado.

As part of the Outdoor Industry Foundation's Protect Today, Play Tomorrow campaign, we put together several case studies on the positive impact of roadless areas. We have included our presentation for your review.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input as Colorado embarks on the petition process.

Roadless areas are a fundamental component of the overall protection of open space and public lands in Colorado. The benefits and values we derive from them – clean air and water; habitat for fish and wildlife; recreation and renewal – are critical to the overall health and well being of our forests and the people who enjoy them.

Sincerely,

Frank Hugelmeier
President
Outdoor Industry Association