



**Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners**

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May 19, 2015

The Honorable Michael Bennet  
458 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
Senate Dirksen Office Building, SD-B 40B  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Scott Tipton  
218 Cannon HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Legislative Exchange Proposal for Thompson Divide Leases

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner and Mr. Tipton,

The Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners is charged with protecting the health, safety and welfare of our citizens; by extension, that goal includes the protection of our environment. Our Regulations for Oil and Gas Operations were adopted to ensure that those goals are met while also providing the oil and gas industry with a set of standards in which responsible exploration and production of oil and gas resources could be permitted. We recently were presented with an interesting idea that would allow for this responsible exploration while lending toward protecting an environmentally sensitive area in our region. We commend SG Interests for coming forward with a proposal that would be a large part of a permanent solution for the Thompson Divide area.

As presented to the County, the proposed federal legislation would allow SG Interests, the lessee of 18 federal oil and gas leases in the Thompson Divide area and, in addition, the lessee of the adjacent Wolf Creek deep rights held indefinitely by production, together totaling approximately 30,000 acres of White River National Forest (WRNF) surface, to exchange those leases for approximately 30,000 acres of federal leases in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest (GMUG). The GMUG mineral acres proposed for exchange are in an area that the Forest Service designated as available for potential oil and gas leasing in the 1993 GMUG Oil and Gas Leasing Plan Amendment. This exchange would allow for further discussions on how to manage lands in the Thompson Divide area into the future and to come up with a permanent solution for this extremely sensitive area. Approximately 600 acres of the proposed exchange lands are in Gunnison County.

While we support the concept of a land exchange that may result in a more permanent solution to the oil and gas development issues in the Thompson Divide area, this must be done in collaboration with our neighbors located in Mesa, Delta, Pitkin and Garfield Counties. We feel that it is necessary to include all counties, towns and interested parties that are potentially impacted by any exchange, in this important dialog. We must consider not only the benefits to a final solution on the Thompson Divide; but to also make certain that the new leases are compatible with the needs and desires of those communities. Please note that Gunnison County will commit to continue to be part of this extremely important conversation with all interested parties.

We are pleased that SG Interests is participating in dialogue, and are hopeful that this is a large step toward a permanent solution to the Thompson Divide development issues.

Senator Bennet, Senator Gardner and Congressman Tipton  
RE: Legislative Exchange Proposal for Thompson Divide Leases  
5/19/2015

We applaud the Colorado delegation for working together to find a balanced solution to this divisive issue.

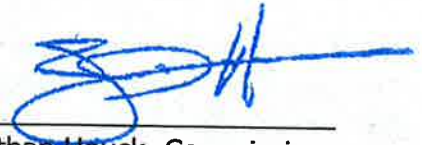
Sincerely,



Paula Swenson, Chairperson



Phil Chamberland, Commissioner



Jonathan Houck, Commissioner