



June 23, 2023

RE: Thompson Divide Withdrawal #63679
Elysia Retzlaff, R2 - Rocky Mountain Region All Units
Scott Fitzwilliams, White River Forest Supervisor
Chad Stewart, GMUG Forest Supervisor
1617 Cole Boulevard
Building 17
Lakewood, CO 80401-3305

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

The Thompson Divide is a largely intact landscape and is highly prized by hunters and anglers, ranchers and recreationalists of all kinds. It provides key grazing allotments, high-value wildlife habitat, and clean water that supplies municipal, domestic, and agricultural users. The area contains diverse, abundant native species and natural communities, as well as extensive, intact, and interconnected habitats. Existing uses in the Thompson Divide support hundreds of jobs and tens of millions in annual economic activity and bolster our towns' recreation-based economies. The Divide embodies the rural and wild character of western Colorado and encompasses more than a dozen inventoried roadless areas. It is well-suited to its current uses, but is threatened with potential oil and gas development and a lack of permanent protection.

For many years, the communities surrounding the Thompson Divide have joined together to advocate for the protection of the Divide from the threat of new fossil fuel development - a use that is not compatible with the livelihoods of those that rely on this landscape today. "Unified for Thompson Divide" is a rallying cry that has brought our region's diverse communities together and captivated imaginations nationwide.

We the undersigned thank the Forest Service and the BLM for initiating the process to withdraw the Thompson Divide area from new oil and gas leases. We support the proposed 20-year Thompson Divide Administrative Withdrawal and encourage the agencies to work expediently to finalize the withdrawal and ensure it remains a priority.

Sincerely,

*Mayor Torre, City of Aspen
Mayor Bill Kane, Town of Basalt, Colorado, Colorado
Mayor Pro Tem David Knight, Town of Basalt, Colorado
Council Member Elyse Hottel, Town of Basalt, Colorado
Council Member Angela Anderson, Town of Basalt, Colorado
Council Member Glenn Drummond, Town of Basalt, Colorado
Council Member Dieter Schindler, Town of Basalt, Colorado
Council Member Ryan Slack, Town of Basalt, Colorado*