**Senator Gardner, Please Co-sponsor the CORE Act**

I had the great privilege recently to meet with Colorado Congressional staffers in Washington, D.C. and express my ardent support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. The CORE Act proposes various designations across 400,000 acres in Colorado including wildlife corridors, recreation and special management areas, wilderness, mineral withdrawals, and our nation’s first National Historic Landscape at Camp Hale. No motorized routes or bike trails will be closed nor will livestock grazing be affected by this legislation. Diverse stakeholders, including elected officials, business owners, ranchers, recreation user groups, and conservation organizations, support the CORE Act and have advocated for these designations for over a decade. The landscapes in the former San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, including the Whitehouse Addition located in Ouray County, are part of the CORE Act.

I applaud Representative Neguse for championing this bill in the US House where it passed with bipartisan support on October 31! As the bill proceeds to the Senate, I thank Senator Bennet for his leadership and urge Senator Gardner to co-sponsor the CORE Act to pass this comprehensive public lands bill in the 116th Congress.

During my meeting in D.C. with Senator Gardner’s staff, I was told, “There is a misconception on the western slope that Senator Gardner is opposed to the CORE Act.” Contrary to that statement, I have never heard of the Senator publicly expressing opposition. What I do know is that he has stated that he “will not stand in the way” of the bill. As a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator Gardner has the authority to ask Senator Murkowski to schedule the bill for a committee hearing. He, of course, could also co-sponsor the CORE Act and elicit bipartisan support in the Senate. By not taking these actions, Senator Gardner is, in effect, standing in the way of the CORE Act.

I urge readers to contact Senator Gardner. Ask him to co-sponsor the CORE Act and request a committee hearing. Learn more about the CORE Act at http://coreact.org. If you are a business owner, you can endorse the CORE Act on the website by completing a simple form. To engage in supporting the CORE Act, please contact me at northernsanjuanbroadband@gmail.com. Together, we can pass the CORE Act for present and future generations and for the intrinsic values of these wild places that we cherish and that sustain our local economies.

Robyn Cascade

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