Dear Secretary Haaland,

I am writing to ask that the Department of Interior designate new Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) across millions of acres of public lands-an authority the Department of Interior hasn't used in over a decade.

I am also writing to save these WSAs for my grandchildren to enjoy and see nature at its finest. These WSAs can also provide solitude in nature away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Can you image seeing the look on a child's face seeing old growth trees for the first time? Or, how about seeing Roosevelt Elk cross the trail in front of you unexpectantly? So many children grow up never having these experiences in nature and only seeing wildlife in zoos.

These quality WSAs harbor important wildlife habitat and migration corridors, provide backcountry recreation experiences, and serve as climate refugia for species adapting to a changing planet. These lands also sequester significant amounts of carbon, help conserve scarce water resources, and protect cultural landscapes and artifacts. WSA designation is critical to protecting these important and deeply-endangered areas from oil and gas leasing, road construction, and other development before they are gone forever.

We need the strongest protections for our wild public lands to meet the Biden administration's stated goal of conserving 30 percent of our nations public lands and waters by 2030. WSAs are an important tool to making that happen--it's time for the Department of the Interior to use its authority to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.