

**Statement of Chris French  
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Before the  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining  
Concerning**

**S. 173, The Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act**

**S. 904, Modernizing Access to Our Public Land (MAPLand) Act**

**S. 182, Pecos Watershed Protection Act**

**S. 609, Ruby Mountains Protection Act**

**S. 1076, REGROW Act of 2021**

**S. 455, Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**

**S. 1686, Human-Powered Travel in Wilderness Areas Act**

**S. 554, To require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the establishment of, and the potential land that could be included in, a unit of the National Forest System in the State of Hawaii, and for other purposes.**

**S. 569, Gilt Edge Mine Conveyance Act**

**S. 1222, A bill to designate and adjust certain lands in the State of Utah as components of the National Wilderness System, and for other purposes.**

**June 16, 2021**

Chairman Cortez Masto, Ranking Member Lee and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on several public land bills.

**S. 173: The Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act**

S.173, the “Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act,” as introduced in both chambers includes provisions that pertain to management of the National Forests in Colorado, including designation of new Wilderness areas, establishment of recreation management areas, designation of wildlife conservation areas, mineral withdrawals, boundary modifications, transfer of National Forest land, and other administrative provisions. This bill would provide Wilderness and special management protections on nearly 400,000 acres of land in Colorado.

USDA supports S.173, the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act, as currently drafted but would like to work with the committee and bill sponsors to make minor adjustments that would improve the legislation and make future management of the designated areas more efficient and feasible.

**TITLE I—CONTINENTAL DIVIDE**

Title I designates six Wilderness area additions, two Wildlife Conservation Areas, one Recreation Management Area, and the first of its kind National Historic Landscape. These areas are located on the White River National Forest, the most visited forest in the country. The landscapes are generally high elevation and attract millions of visitors wanting to enjoy the views

and recreate as hunters, anglers, hikers, mountain bikers, skiers, and off-road riders. These areas also support sensitive ecosystems and diverse wildlife.

The proposed designations would permanently withdraw, subject to valid existing rights, all National Forest System (NFS) lands within these areas on the White River National Forest from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and operation under the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws. USDA supports the designations and would like to work with the Committee and bill sponsor to make minor adjustments to the Ptarmigan Peak and Eagles Nest Wilderness Additions.

### **The Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Additions**

Section 102(a)(1) designates 6,876 acres of the White River National Forest, currently depicted as the “Proposed Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness,” for incorporation into and management as part of the existing -Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness designated by section 2(a)(18) of Public Law 103-77.

The Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness lies on the western flank of the Williams Fork Mountain Range, three miles east of Silverthorne, Colorado, on the White River National Forest. The four proposed Wilderness additions encompass approximately 6,876 acres of NFS lands adjacent to the existing Wilderness. These additions include Ute Pass, Acorn Creek, Straight Creek, and Ptarmigan.

We recommend the following small changes be made to the boundaries of the proposed Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Additions to provide for more efficient and feasible management of the area:

- The southwest portion of the proposed Wilderness addition is immediately adjacent to a private land parcel; we recommend a quarter mile buffer between designated Wilderness and private land to provide for future fuels reduction and fire protection.
- We recommend a 300-foot buffer for Road 2840.1 so it is consistent with other travel management regulations on the Forest.

### **The Eagles Nest Wilderness Additions**

Section 102(a)(2) designates 9,419 acres of the White River National Forest, depicted as the “Proposed Freeman Creek Wilderness Addition” and the “Proposed Spraddle Creek Wilderness Addition,” to be incorporated into and managed as part of the “Eagles Nest Wilderness” designated by Public Law 94-352.

The Act would designate two separate parcels on the west side of the existing Wilderness area. The proposed designation would largely be consistent with current management.

The proposed Freeman Creek Wilderness Addition encompasses 1,144 acres within the National Forest boundary. In the Forest Plan, 290 acres of the proposed addition are recommended for Wilderness designation. The remaining 850 acres are currently managed for non-motorized recreation opportunities and the four remaining acres are private lands.

The proposed Spraddle Creek Wilderness Addition encompasses 8,362 acres. Of those, 872 acres are recommended for Wilderness designation under the Forest Plan. The remaining 7,490 acres are currently managed for primitive backcountry experiences. Although this designation would remove 4,156 acres from consideration for commercial timber harvest and active forest

management, there are no current plans for any commercial harvesting in the area. The Department supports this designation. However, we would like to work with the bill sponsor and the committee to make two small changes:

- We recommend increasing the buffer around the Eiseman Hut from 150 feet to at least 500 feet. This will allow for future management flexibility related to the hut latrine location and fuels reduction to protect the hut.
- The buffer around Forest Service road 719.1 should be increased from 37.5 feet on each side of the road to 300 feet on each side of the road so it is consistent with the current travel management plan.

## **TITLE II—SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS**

Section 203 would designate several parcels of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests totaling approximately 22,841 acres as Wilderness under the National Wilderness Preservation System. These parcels would be additions to the existing Lizard Head and Mount Sneffels Wilderness areas.

Section 204 would also designate the Sheep Mountain and Liberty Bell East areas as Special Management Areas to be managed to maintain or improve the area's existing Wilderness character for potential inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Additionally, Section 206(g) would permanently withdraw these designated lands as well as 6,590 acres of NFS lands in Naturita Canyon on the Uncompahgre National Forest from entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws; location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and operation under the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws.

USDA supports these designations and withdrawals and defers to the Department of the Interior regarding the proposal in section 203 to designate approximately 8,884 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands as the McKenna Peak Wilderness and the release of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Study Area in section 205.

## **TITLE III—THOMPSON DIVIDE**

Section 303 withdraws approximately 187,000 acres on the Gunnison National Forest from operation of the public land, mining, mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights. The Forest currently operates grazing permits, outfitter and guide permits, and mineral leases in the area consistent with the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest's Land Management Plan. USDA supports these withdrawals and defers to the Department of the Interior (DOI) for their views on the bill as it affects public lands under their jurisdiction including fugitive coal mine methane collection and use.

## **TITLE IV—CURECANTI NATIONAL RECREATION AREA**

Section 402 establishes the Curecanti National Recreation Area consisting of approximately 50,667 acres in Colorado. Further, this section allows the DOI to enter into management agreements, or modify existing agreements, relating to the authorities of several DOI bureaus and Forest Service to manage federal land within the National Recreation Area. Section 403 transfers jurisdiction of approximately 2,560 acres of the Gunnison National Forest to the National Park Service as part of the National Recreation Area (NRA). USDA supports the establishment of the National Recreation Area and would like to work with the Committee and

bill sponsor to resolve areas of the National Forests which were removed from public access when the Bureau of Reclamation created the NRA in 1958.

### **S 904: Modernizing Access to Our Public Land (MAPLand) Act**

The Modernizing Access to Our Public Lands Act would direct DOI, the USDA Forest Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to jointly develop and adopt interagency standards to ensure compatibility and interoperability among federal databases for the collection and dissemination of outdoor recreation data related to federal lands. Specifically, the bill would require DOI, the USDA Forest Service, and the Army Corps of Engineers to digitize and publish geographic information system mapping data that includes:

- federal interests in private land, including easements and rights-of-way;
- status information as to whether roads and trails are open or closed;
- the dates on which roads and trails are seasonally opened and closed;
- the types of vehicles that are allowed on each segment of roads and trails;
- the boundaries of areas where hunting or recreational shooting is regulated or closed; and
- the boundaries of any portion of a body of water that is closed to entry, is closed to watercraft, or has horsepower limitations for watercraft.

USDA supports the goal of enhancing access to National Forest System lands by providing the specified data digitally for online use by the public. The Department would like to work with the bill sponsors and the Committee to address some remaining issues posed by this bill.

Some of the information and classes of data are currently available and accessible in Forest Service databases, including easements and rights-of-ways, and whether and when roads and trails are open or closed to various classes of motorized vehicles. Additionally, the Sportsmen's Access to Federal Land provisions in the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act (Public Law 116-9) requires annual reporting of National Forest System lands temporarily or permanently closed to hunting, fishing or recreational shooting under the Act but does not require the closures to be provided in digital form for use in online mapping.

Currently, the Forest Service does not maintain information on water bodies that are closed to watercraft or have horsepower limitations. Additionally, on water bodies where states, counties, or other governmental entities have jurisdiction over watercraft use, it would be exceedingly difficult for the Forest Service to build and keep current an accurate database of those restrictions. We recommend the bill language clarify that the Agency not be required to collect and compile information on watercraft restrictions imposed by other governmental entities.

We additionally recommend the date for reporting be changed to allow upward reporting after the end of the fiscal year, so units can prioritize keeping facilities open for public use and maintaining preparedness for emergency response such as wildfires during summer and early fall.

USDA appreciates the Committee's interest in these important topics and strongly supports efforts to foster recreational use of federal lands. We look forward to working with the bill sponsors and the Committee to promote these important goals.

### **S. 182: Pecos Watershed Protection Act**

USDA supports S. 182, the "Pecos Watershed Protection Act," as it aligns with the President's vision to boost conservation strategies and polices to preserve public, private, and Tribal areas of interest.

This bill withdraws identified federal land in the Pecos River watershed in New Mexico from entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws; location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing or mineral materials. The area proposed for withdrawal includes approximately 165,000 acres of NFS land and approximately 1,600 acres of DOI Bureau of Land Management land. This proposed withdrawal constitutes 66 percent of the 253,343 acres of watershed depicted outside of the Pecos Wilderness in the Santa Fe National Forest.

The proposed withdrawal would be subject to valid existing rights, meaning mining and associated activities can continue within the withdrawn area as long as valid rights were established at or prior to the time of the withdrawal. The respective federal agencies would need to conduct any necessary reviews to verify whether valid rights exist.

Under the current 1987 Forest Plan, just over 80% (~135,000 acres) of the proposed withdrawal area has limited surface use (no surface occupancy or seasonal restrictions) for leasable minerals, 18% (~29,000 acres) has no leasing restrictions, and the Pecos Wild and Scenic River wild classified segment (about 67 acres) is already withdrawn from leasing. The area is also composed of 8 Inventoried Roadless Areas (27,000 acres) and the Pecos Wild and Scenic River recreational classified segment (~1,500 acres) although these areas have no leasing restrictions in and of themselves. The Forest is currently revising their Forest Plan and expects to have a Final Plan and Environmental Impact Statement along with a draft Record of Decision in 2021.

The Forest Service acknowledges the deep Tribal connection to this land and will continue our commitment to collaborate with Congress, Tribes, acequias, local communities, and watershed partners who value the Pecos Canyon watershed to balance our multiple-use mission and bolster resilient landscapes and watersheds. This is evidenced by ongoing Tribal consultation and site visits to enhance communication, collaboration and share local knowledge.

### **S. 609: Ruby Mountains Protection Act**

This bill withdraws 309,272 acres of NFS land in the Ruby Mountains on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada from all forms of operation under the mineral leasing laws. The Administration supports the proposed withdrawal in S.609, which aligns with the President's vision to boost conservation strategies and policies to preserve public, private, and Tribal areas of interest.

The proposed withdrawal would be subject to valid existing rights. Existing leases and associated activities can continue as long as those leases were established at or prior to the time of the withdrawal.

The remainder of the Ruby Mountains managed by the Forest Service is designated as Wilderness. The Ruby Mountains offer extensive cultural, scenic, and ecological values that help to support a \$165 million recreation industry in Elko County. The area includes wildlife habitat for species including greater sage grouse, and the federally listed Lahontan cutthroat trout. The area also supports the state's largest mule deer herd and an important migration corridor. Mapping of the area has determined that there is little to no potential for oil or gas resources because of unfavorable geologic conditions.

The USDA Forest Service conducted a detailed analysis for oil and gas leasing availability on a portion of lands within the Ruby Mountains. In March 2019, the agency released a draft Record of Decision and final Environmental Assessment concluding that no leasing should occur due to the low potential for oil and gas resources in the area and extensive citizen and community involvement with strong support for no leasing at this time. The decision notice was signed by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor on May 7, 2019.

### **S. 1076: Revive Economic Growth and Reclaim Orphaned Wells Act of 2021**

USDA appreciates the Committee's attention to this important issue and supports the goal of S. 1076, the "Revive Economic Growth and Reclaim Orphaned Wells Act of 2021," to remediate the thousands of orphaned oil and gas wells on federal and non-federal lands. This aligns with the President's 2022 Budget, which provides \$100 million to reclaim orphan oil and gas wells on NFS lands to improve forest and grassland health while creating jobs.

S. 1076 directs the Secretary of the Interior in cooperation with the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program to identify and permanently plug and remediate orphaned wells located on federal lands administered by the agencies within the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the USDA. Additionally, the bill requires the DOI to establish a Tribal grant program administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and a state program administered by the DOI that would enable qualifying Tribes and states to undertake the same type of activities. The bill authorizes \$4.275 billion for the state grant programs, \$250 million for the federal program, and \$150 million for the Tribal grant program.

Recognizing the DOI's primary role in establishing and administering the program, my testimony will focus on issues specific to NFS lands. We estimate NFS lands have approximately 11,500 unplugged orphaned wells, heavily concentrated on non-federal mineral estates within our eastern forests. This estimate is an extrapolation based on early inventory work. Most of these wells were drilled and left unplugged long before any regulation or record keeping, with the originating parties lost to memory.

The primary orphaned well issues on NFS lands are legacy wells originating from development of non-federal oil and gas rights. Today, most orphaned wells are on split estate lands with

federal ownership of the surface and private ownership of the minerals. However, through the acquisition process, many non-federally developed orphaned wells also occur on lands where the United States now owns both the surface and mineral estate.

The federal orphaned well inventory provided to us by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lists eight wells on NFS lands that originated from federal oil and gas leases. The BLM has scheduled and will fund plugging of all eight wells, including surface reclamation, during the 2021 and 2022 fiscal years.

Orphaned wells and abandoned infrastructure present a variety of environmental, human health and safety, and forest management issues. Left unplugged, orphaned wells can leak methane – a potent greenhouse gas – and serve as a conduit for contaminants to reach surface and groundwater. Unstable well sites can erode and contribute to sedimentation, impacting nearby wetlands and streams. Abandoned infrastructure including the wells themselves, pump jacks, unburied pipes, tanks, and separators are not only an eyesore, but present a hazard to public safety and limitations on management options for other forest uses.

As noted earlier, most orphaned wells on NFS lands originate in areas of split estate and from non-federal development. S. 1076 does not specifically address the issue of split estate and whether wells originating from non-federal development would be addressed under the federal program or under the state grant programs. If the intent is to manage these wells under the federal program, we would welcome the opportunity to work with the committee to clarify the definition of federal land and the mechanisms for addressing these wells under the bill.

We look forward to continue working with Congress and other federal and state agencies to address this longstanding problem.

#### **S. 455: Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**

USDA supports S. 455, “Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act,” and would like to work with the committee and the sponsor of this bill to address some technical and timing concerns.

S. 455 would designate new and expand existing Wilderness areas, potential Wilderness areas, and certain rivers in the Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park as wild and scenic rivers. My testimony pertains only to the designations proposed on the Olympic National Forest. We defer to the Department of the Interior on portions of the bill pertaining to the Olympic National Park. USDA recognizes the importance of Wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers, and the Forest Service embraces its mission to steward and safeguard Wilderness character in Wilderness areas, and the free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values of wild and scenic rivers.

We would like to work with the committee and bill sponsor to consider Wilderness boundary modifications. Our experience is that Wilderness boundaries that follow topographic features like contour lines, creeks, and ridgetops are more manageable than boundaries based on age-class differences in timber stands, which can be difficult to describe and survey.

Of the 19 rivers proposed for wild and scenic river designation in the bill, 13 include segments flowing through the NFS. We would like to work with the committee and bill sponsor to identify potential locations for future restoration or habitat improvement work to ensure the wild and scenic river designations appropriately support the specific fisheries and water quality management needs of these watersheds.

Additionally, USDA wants to ensure any new designations are properly integrated into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System with enough time to develop comprehensive river management plans and to establish detailed boundaries in cooperation with Tribes, state and local governments, and interested public stakeholders. The short timeframes identified under Sections 3(b) and 3(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for identifying detailed boundaries and completing comprehensive river management plans will be challenging to meet. We appreciate language included in Section 3(c) of this bill to provide an additional degree of flexibility on timeframes associated with completing comprehensive river management plans for these designations. However, we would like to work with the committee and bill sponsor to clarify the intended effect of this provision in relation to the timelines and scale of future land management plan revisions for the Olympic National Forest.

### **S. 1686: Human-Powered Travel in Wilderness Areas Act**

While USDA supports expanding recreational access on NFS lands in a manner that preserves the ecological, cultural, and historical integrity of the landscape and supports the social and economic needs of adjacent communities, we strongly oppose S. 1686, “Human-Powered Travel in Wilderness Areas Act.”

S. 1686 conflicts with the foundational policy statement of the Wilderness Act of 1964: “In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States.” Specifically, S. 1686 would increase management challenges associated with preserving Wilderness character by altering the consistent interpretation and implementation of the Wilderness Act’s prohibition on mechanical transport across the National Wilderness Preservation System.

S. 1686 would amend the Wilderness Act of 1964 to create an exception to the current prohibition on mechanical transport in congressionally designated Wilderness by requiring local officials to seek to accommodate all forms of non-motorized travel, including bicycles. My testimony pertains only to provisions affecting the Forest Service and NFS lands.

The Forest Service manages Wilderness as an enduring resource in balance with the multiple uses NFS lands. Wilderness areas under the Department’s jurisdiction are found in 39 states and Puerto Rico. The 36.6 million acres of Wilderness the Forest Service manages in 448 Wilderness units constitute 19.2 percent of the 193 million acres of the NFS. There are just over 32,000 miles of NFS trails within Forest Service Wilderness units. Outside of designated Wilderness areas, the Forest Service authorizes bicycle use on 120,660 miles (76%) of the NFS trail system.



## **Section 2: Returning Human-Powered Travel to Wilderness Areas**

Section 2 would amend several provisions of section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(c)) to permit the use of bicycles within congressionally designated Wilderness areas. The bill does so by, among other things, adding the term “nonmotorized travel” to the Wilderness Act, which the bill defines as “a method of human travel that does not use a propulsive internal or external motor with a nonliving power source.” This term covers several methods of transport currently prohibited by the Wilderness Act, including bicycles. Specifically, this bill would modify section 4(c)’s prohibition on “other form[s] of mechanical transport” by adding a clause that creates an exception for any form of “nonmotorized travel.”

In addition, Section 2 would require local officials within the Wilderness-managing federal agencies—Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and USDA Forest Service—to determine within two years of enactment all permissible forms of nonmotorized travel over any permitted route in Wilderness. Failure to make that determination for any Wilderness within that timeframe would result in allowing any form of nonmotorized travel on permitted routes in that Wilderness. Section 2 also requires local line officers to seek to accommodate all forms of nonmotorized travel in Wilderness to the maximum extent practicable.

USDA embraces the Wilderness Act’s charge to manage areas designated by Congress as Wilderness “for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as Wilderness.” The Forest Service manages Wilderness as an enduring resource and one of the multiple uses of NFS land.

### **S. 554: To require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the establishment of, and the potential land that could be included in, a unit of the National Forest System in the State of Hawaii, and for other purposes.**

USDA supports S. 554, which would require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing a unit of the NFS on the islands of Hawai’i, Maui, Molokai, Lāna’i, O’ahu, and Kaua’i in the State of Hawai’i; and to identify available land within the study area that could be included in the unit. The Secretary would be required to conduct the study in coordination with the Hawai’i Department of Land and Natural Resources and consult with the Hawai’i Department of Agriculture, and other interested governmental entities, private and nonprofit organizations, and any interested individuals.

USDA supports a study that would identify available land within a study area in the State of Hawai’i that could be included in a National Forest unit or designated as a research natural area or an experimental forest that would have the grassroots support of local communities.

The study would consider unique vegetation types that occur in the study area that should be targeted for inclusion in the unit; evaluate the ability of the Secretary to improve and protect forest areas within the study area; secure favorable water flows within the study area; determine whether the unit of the National Forest System would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection and visitor use opportunities; evaluate the willingness of landowners to sell or transfer land in the study area to the Secretary; evaluate the suitability of land in the study area for potential selection and designation as a research natural area or an experimental forest; identify

cost estimates for any federal acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance that would be needed to establish the unit of the NFS; and consider other alternatives for the conservation, protection, and use of areas within the study area by the federal government, state or local government entities, or private and nonprofit organizations.

Not later than three years after enactment of this Act, the Secretary would be required to submit a report on the results of the study and any conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Natural Resources.

This study would allow the Forest Service, the State of Hawai'i and interested private or non-profit organizations and individuals to work together to identify lands within the study area that would promote shared stewardship with local communities, including indigenous populations, the State of Hawai'i, and non-profit groups. The study provides the opportunity to explore supporting or expanding Forest Service programs related to conservation of forest ecosystems, sustainable forestry, protection of threatened, endangered, and migratory species, controlling the spread of invasive species, reforestation, and other forest restoration efforts.

#### **S 569: Gilt Edge Mine Conveyance Act**

S. 569, the "Gilt Edge Mine Conveyance Act," would convey approximately 266 acres of NFS lands administered by the Black Hills National Forest within the Gilt Edge Mine Superfund site boundary to the state of South Dakota. The Gilt Edge Mine is in Lawrence County, South Dakota, within the Black Hills National Forest boundary. The mine is an inactive gold mine.

USDA supports S. 569 to consolidate ownership in and around the Gilt Edge Mine. Currently the mine encompasses a patchwork of NFS lands and lands owned by the state of South Dakota. The state of South Dakota has jurisdiction and oversight of the Superfund site to implement remediation actions and provide long term monitoring. Consolidating ownership of the entire Gilt Edge Mine to the state of South Dakota will make it easier for the State to fulfill its obligation for site remediation and monitoring.

S. 569 requires the state of South Dakota to conduct an appraisal of the property following uniform appraisal standards for federal land acquisitions and conform to uniform standards of professional appraisal practices. The state of South Dakota will pay to the Secretary of Agriculture an amount equal to the fair market value of the land to be conveyed. The cost of conveyance will be paid by the state of South Dakota including the cost of the appraisal and the survey. Proceeds from the sale of the 266 acres will be used for the maintenance and improvement of land or administrative facilities on the Black Hills National Forest within the state of South Dakota.

#### **S.1222: Bonneville Shoreline Trail Advancement Act**

USDA Supports S. 1222 which would designate parcels of National Forest System lands on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest (Forest) in Utah as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and makes boundary adjustments to existing wilderness areas

on the Forest, thereby removing these components from the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Section 2 of the bill would add approximately 326 acres of National Forest System lands to the Mount Olympus Wilderness. While the acres included in the proposed additions to the Mount Olympus Wilderness have not yet been evaluated for wilderness characteristics through the land management planning process, the Forest Service finds that these additions contain wilderness attributes and will not detract from existing wilderness areas.

Section 3 of S. 1222 makes boundary adjustments to existing wilderness components on the Forest, identifying approximately 326 acres for removal from the National Wilderness Preservation System. The bill stipulates that acres removed from the National Wilderness Preservation System shall be managed as part of the Forest. As depicted on the “Bonneville Shoreline Trail Legislative Map” dated July 9, 2020, the bill makes the following adjustments: approximately 10 acres are removed from Twin Peaks Wilderness; approximately 109 acres are removed from Lone Peak Wilderness; approximately 11 acres are removed from Mount Naomi Wilderness; and approximately 197 acres are removed from Mount Olympus Wilderness.

The proposed removal of these parcels from the National Wilderness Preservation System will advance completion of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail.

That concludes my testimony, Madam Chairman. I would be happy to answer any questions you or the other members have for me.