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April 6, 2010

The Honorable John Salazar
326 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Salazar:

We are writing you concerning the collaborative community process conducted by the Hermosa Creek Work Group over the past two years. This has been an open, inclusive process that has brought together local citizens and organizations that are concerned with protecting the special attributes of the Hermosa Creek Watershed in La Plata and San Juan Counties in southwest Colorado. La Plata County supports this process, and the consensus proposal the group has crafted.

The Hermosa Creek Work Group has worked within the framework developed by the River Protection Work Group whose goal is "Involving the public in protecting the natural values of selected streams while allowing water development to continue." As a result of this process, the Hermosa Creek Work Group determined that *"The Hermosa Creek area is exceptional because it is a large intact (unfragmented) natural watershed containing diverse ecosystems, including fish, plants and wildlife, over a road elevation range, and supports a variety of multiple uses, including recreation and grazing, in the vicinity of a large town."*

The Work Group has reached consensus on a legislative proposal that includes:

- A Special Management Area (SMA) with boundaries encompassing the Hermosa Creek watershed
- A Wilderness area on the west side of Hermosa Creek
- An area on the east side of Hermosa Creek, and south of Hermosa Park Road, that remains un-roaded
- An area in the northern portion of the SMA that remains open to relatively higher intensity uses
- Additional provisions included in the Hermosa Creek Work Group Final Report

La Plata County supports the proposal outlined above for the Hermosa Creek watershed, and respectfully requests that your office initiate a legislative process to achieve the goals set forth by the Hermosa Work Group. Further, if legislation is pursued, we would appreciate being kept abreast of the legislation's progress as well as the opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft legislation.

Sincerely,

LA PLATA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Joelle Riddle
Vice-Chair



Kellie C. Hotter
Commissioner