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INVOICE

2025 1st Quarter Work for Public Land, Environment & Natural Resources Work by Robert K. Weidner on behalf of Garfield County, Colorado in Washington D.C.

- Worked on Historic Rights of Way (R.S. 2477) issue with Senate Energy Committee Chairman, Utah Senator Mike Lee and Energy Committee Professional staff, David Gardner;
- Follow up meeting with Utah Senator Mike Lee's committee staffer, David Gardner and visiting Garfield County, Colorado Commissioners Mike Samson, Perry Will, Rio Blanco County Commissioners, Washoe County, Nevada Commissioner Jeanie Herman, Chavez County, New Mexico Commissioners Michael Perry and Waide Cliff and others of like mind to advocate Historic Rights of Way legislation, access to federal lands, repeal of hostile Biden policies and over-ride Democratic staff objections;
- Staff objections continue to center around pressure from the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club and National Parks and Conservation Association who argued that R.S. 2477 Rights of way, if recognized by law, will impede Congress from passing additional Wilderness designations in the Public Lands states—a 50 year old argument which is not accurate;

- In reality, the very high burden of proof to have federal courts recognize such rights of way requires counties to demonstrate that the right of way existed prior to passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management (FLPMA) in 1976;
- Current House Natural Resources Committee Chairman, Bruce Westerman supports the Historic Rights of Way legislation and will work with Senate Energy Committee Chairman Lee and receptive Democrats to move the bill as House Committee Chairman in the current 119th Congress;
- Same group met with House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Westerman's Chief of Staff, Brandon Miller to discuss R.S. 2477, National Forest management, West Slope Colorado Natural gas production and removing Biden Administration impediments to public lands access and multiple use of said lands;
- Led Eight Major Uranium mining Company Representatives including Uranium Producers of America President Scott Melbe. We visited 33 key Congressional offices during the last week in March; (Rob MacGregor, Staff Director to House Natural Resources Committee Chairman, Bruce Westerman (R-AR), Rep. Neal Dunn (R-FL), Rep Gary Palmer (R-AL), Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI), Senator Cynthia Lumis (R-WY), Jake McCurdy, Policy Director to Senate Energy Committee Chairman Mike Lee (R-UT), Rep. Mitch McCormack (R-GA), Rep. Celeste Malloy (R-UT), Rep. Chuck Fleishman (R-TN), Rep Joe Wilson (R-SC), Rep Cliff Bentz (R-OR), Senator Jim Justice (R-W VA), Rep. Mike McCloud (R-TX), House Mining Subcommittee Chairman Pete Stauber (R-MN), Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA), Rep. Jeff Hurd (R-CO), Congressional Western Caucus Chairman, Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA), Senator John Barrasso (R-WY), Rep. Harriett Hageman (R-WY), Rep,

Gabe Evans (R-CO), Alyse Huffman, Mining Minority Professional staff, Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Rep Adrian Smith (R-NE), Rep. Mike Kennedy (R-UT), Rep Lauren Boebert (R-CO), Rep Jim Baird (R-IN), Rep. Randy Weber (AR-TX).

- Met with Dr. Michael Goff, Acting Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy (Department of Energy);
- Met with Chriss Abbott, Acting U.S. Trade representative at the Department of Commerce;
- Met with newly formed Trump National Energy Dominance Council headed by David Copley, who gave me his contact information under the direction of Interior Secretary Douglas Burgum;
- Message to each audience received positive responses & focused on the following:
 1. The critical need to keep Congressionally imposed sanctions against Russia in place indefinitely;
 2. Since Russia continues to launder uranium (26 million lbs so far) through China to the U.S. which is causing uranium prices to drop from over \$100/lbs to current \$63/lbs, China must be added to sanctions against Russia;
 3. Any negotiated end to war in Ukraine must not lift Russian sanctions;
 4. \$2.7 billion Congressionally enacted 2024 Nuclear Fuel Security Act must not fall prey to Musk DOGE reviews as it came from recommendations of the 1st Trump Administration, not Biden and must be fully implemented in order to attract private equity market investments;
 5. Congress must enact legislation making uranium a critical mineral, overturning Biden Executive Order (E.O) which removed it from list. This will help uranium producers

fast-track regulatory obstacles which is consistent with President Trump's energy dominance objectives;

6. Presidential E.O. of March 20, 2025 must be fully utilized/availed by mining companies to both speed up existing projects and make Administration aware of longer term opportunities.
- Met again with House Agriculture Subcommittee staff to Subcommittee Chairman (Now Western Caucus Chairman) Doug La Malfa's (R-CA) to offer strong support House Agriculture Committee Chairman, Glen Thompson's 3-year extension (fy 24, 25, 26) of Secure Rural School (SRS) National Forest payments in the House Farm bill as well as promoting natural gas exports from Colorado's West Slope and other energy resources;
 - SRS authorization expired on October 1, 2023 with last payment going out in May to National Forest counties. PILT payments are jeopardized if Congress fails to fund SRS because the current PILT formula subtracts prior year payments in the heavily forested Pacific Coast states which, given the \$250 million plus SRS price tag means more money for Colorado counties and counties in other western states;
 - SRS payments are not discretionary appropriations under the Budget Act of 1974, but are treated as short-term entitlements which must be paid for by cuts in spending elsewhere in the budget or by tax increases. The primary obstacle to passing this 3-year extension now is for unknown reasons, a lack of willingness to move the bill by House Speaker Mike Johnson even though he receives significant (the largest of any Louisiana House member) SRS payments. ;

- Originally, SRS was devised to replace Congress's commitment to counties under the 1908 National Forest authorization act, where counties and schools were granted 25% of timber receipts generated from National Forests and which were stable until the listing of critical habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl in the early 1990's under the 1973 Endangered Species Act;
- For over eighty years, counties acted as the primary advocates for timber sales because payments to counties were "coupled" with advocates of timber harvests. In 2008, then Majority Leader Harry Reid, at the behest of national environmental groups, "decoupled" National Forest SRS payments from timber sales. Thus, today, active National Forest Management (timber harvesting) and Secure rural schools payments are—for all intents and purposes two separate, yet critical payment sources for counties;
- As mentioned previously, I continue to work closely with Senate SRS extension sponsors, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Oregon's Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D);
- Again, Garfield County received \$305,666.57 SRS payment in May which critically, is necessary to protect the county against any Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILT) prior year payment deduction for the county;
- Continuing follow up on proposed BLM rule to overturn 1960 Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act with new Conservation category by educating members of House and Senate that this should be debated and decided in Congress;

- I continued working on behalf of Garfield and other counties to support Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-Arkansas.) and U.S. Rep. Scott Peters (D-California). This historic and bipartisan legislation passed the House in February and is awaiting action by the Senate this Spring. It will spur active forest management in the U.S. and protect rural communities, but will not generate sufficient revenues to replace SRS payments. SRS must continue on a stand-alone basis.

On a positive note, the bill will:

- Simplify and expedite environmental reviews for forest management projects
- Promote federal, state, tribal and local collaboration
- Deter frivolous litigation that delays essential projects
- Create a framework for prioritizing treatments in the forests at highest risk of wildfire
- Encourage adoption of state-of-the-art science and data for federal land managers
- Encourage active management to improve the safety of powerlines and other infrastructure
- Strengthen tools like Good Neighbor Authority and Stewardship Contracting

Amount Due: \$7,500.00

Please make check payable to:

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