

SUPPORT GOOD SCIENCE, GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT POLICY, AND GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF OUR PUBLIC LANDS

SUPPORT THE MARK UDALL RS 2477 AMENDMENT

July 14, 2003

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the millions of members represented by our organizations, we urge you to support the amendment being offered by Rep. Mark Udall to stop the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from giving away hundreds of thousands of acres of our nation's most treasured public lands to local counties and private entities for development. The Udall amendment is among a handful of important amendments being offered to protect our public lands and wildlife.

A BLM regulation published earlier this year resurrects a repealed 137 year-old mining law, referred to as Revised Statute 2477 (RS 2477), that was originally intended to promote westward development and grant access over public lands not reserved for other uses. The regulatory nature and arcane title of the disclaimer rule belie the tremendous damage it could wreak on our nation's spectacular public lands.

Places potentially impacted by RS 2477 rights-of-way claims include National Parks such as Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias, the Grand Canyon, and Dinosaur National Monument, as well as National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, areas within the National Landscape Conservation System, wilderness areas, and existing wilderness study areas. The property rights of private landowners—including homesteads and ranches—could also be jeopardized under the rule, in addition to municipalities and federal lands used for military installations.

RS 2477 was repealed under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and replaced with an updated process for granting reasonable access across BLM lands—a process that has resulted in the grant of thousands of miles of road rights-of-way across federal lands for legitimate transportation needs. Nevertheless, the disclaimer rule resurrects and manipulates RS 2477 to spur development—including road construction, utility lines, pipelines, cell towers—on our commonly owned lands.

We are confident Congress does not want to be part of this legacy. Again, we urge you to vote YES on the Mark Udall amendment on RS 2477.

Sincerely,

*American Society of Landscape Architects
The Wilderness Society
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
American Lands Alliance
Public Lands Foundation
Campaign for America's Wilderness
Californians for Western Wilderness
American Hiking Society*

*REP America
Natural Resources Defense Council
Scenic America
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
California Wilderness Coalition
Alaska Wilderness League
Sierra Club*