

**Opening Statement
Chairman Raúl M. Grijalva
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Legislative Hearing
March 11, 2010**

The Subcommittee will now come to order. Thank you.

Today we will receive testimony on H.R. 4289: Colorado Wilderness Act of 2009. The legislation proposes designating approximately 850,000 acres across the State of Colorado as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Our Colleague, Representative Diana DeGette, has been a tireless champion of the Colorado Wilderness Act. She understands the unique threats facing her state's last pristine areas, and she has modified her legislation over the years to address the changing landscape and to protect the highest priority areas.

Recently, the Subcommittee heard testimony on another Colorado wilderness bill, the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, introduced by Representative John Salazar. During the hearing, it was clear that despite the sometimes controversial nature of land management issues, Mr. Salazar

had walked a path of collaboration and compromise that led to a strongly endorsed piece of legislation.

As a wilderness champion myself, I recognize that there are multiple ways to successfully pass wilderness legislation. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses about the Colorado Wilderness Act and the lands across Colorado proposed for designation. The citizens of Colorado are lucky to have representatives that are so dedication to the preservation of the unique areas across their state.

I would now like to turn to Ranking Member Bishop for any opening statement he may have.