January 5, 2022

Senator Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet,

Thank you for your leadership on climate issues affecting the State of Colorado, including specifically your leadership on the issue of coal mine methane emissions. As you're aware, fugitive methane emissions from coal mines contribute substantially to the State's greenhouse gas emissions, having a larger annual global warming impact than that of hundreds of thousands of passenger vehicles. Mitigating these emissions is critical to address a significant source of climate pollution while contributing to the greenhouse gas management economy and the sustainable future of western Colorado communities.

We're grateful for your efforts to enable coal mine methane destruction projects in Colorado through provisions in the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Economy Act (CORE Act) that would establish a pilot program within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to facilitate projects that would destroy coal mine methane pollution. Several such projects have been conceived by private enterprises in Colorado, working in collaboration with local governments and other stakeholders including the undersigned organizations. We continue to strongly support the CORE Act and actively work toward its passage in Congress.

We are also acutely aware that the climate crisis demands immediate action on coal mine methane emissions. We are therefore asking for your help to request that the Department of the Interior (DOI) utilize its existing authority under Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to permit a coal mine methane destruction project at the abandoned Redstone-area mines in Colorado, and to permit this project now. We furthermore would like DOI reinitiate the waste mine methane rulemaking that was initiated in 2014 to facilitate coal mine methane destruction activities on all federal lands.

Working together as the Crystal Valley Methane Working Group, the undersigned organizations have prepared the attached memorandum outlining DOI's authority to permit a coal mine methane destruction project in Pitkin County, and a suggested path for doing so expediently. We respectfully request that you share this memorandum with decision-makers at DOI and BLM leadership, and urge them to move forward with an authorization process for the project as soon as possible. Each of the organizations signed on to this letter have made commitments to supporting the project in as a strategic priority that supports expedient climate action, or financially to move this project forward. The Crystal Valley Methane Working Group is eager to work with you and our land managers to make this project a success for our climate, our communities and our public lands.

With sincerest gratitude,

Kelly McNicholas Kurry, Chair, Pitkin County Commissioners
Mike Kaplan, CEO, Aspen Skiing Company
Will Rousch, Director, Wilderness Workshop
Rick Lafaro, Director, Roaring Fork Conservancy,
Katie Schworer, Chair, Community Office for Resource Efficiency (CORE)
Bryan Hannegan, CEO, Holy Cross Energy

Dan Blankenship, CEO, Roaring Fork Transit Authority

CC: Jamie Connell, BLM Colorado State Director
Greg Larson, BLM Upper Colorado River District Manager
Larry Sandoval, BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office Manager
Scott Fitzwilliams, USFS White River National Forest Supervisor
Kevin Warner, USFS Aspen-Sopris District Ranger