



COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: September 16, 2025

ITEM TITLE, PRESENTER: Consideration and Approval of Letter of Comment on U.S. Department of Agriculture Proposed Rule to Rescind the 2001 Roadless Rule, Nick Sandberg, Public Lands Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION: Approve and sign letter

SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is initiating an EIS to consider the effects of a proposed rule to rescind the 2001 Roadless Rule on U.S. Forest Service lands. The Roadless Rule prohibits new road construction and re-construction and timber harvest in Inventoried Roadless Areas except under very limited circumstances. Critics claim that these restrictions have hindered or prohibited management activities needed to maintain or restore healthy forest conditions. Due to this limited or lack of active management, some IRAs have become ripe for potential catastrophic wildfire with dense stands of timber, brush and woodland exacerbated by climate change, prolonged and frequent droughts, and insect and disease infestations. The proposed rescission of the Roadless Rule would allow local forest managers more flexibility for active management in former Inventoried Roadless Areas. In San Juan County, almost 30% of Forest Service lands are managed as Inventoried Roadless Areas. Comments on the proposal are being accepted until September 19, 2025.

HISTORY/PAST ACTION

In 2018, Utah initiated work to petition the U.S. Department of Agriculture to amend the Roadless Rule with special provisions for Utah. San Juan County participated in this effort but the State's petition was not successful.

FISCAL IMPACT

Unknown