## Stephen C. Fearn

P.O. Box 468

Silverton, Colorado 81433 Telephone (970) 387-5813 e-mail fearneng@rmi.net

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Congressman Scott Tipton U. S. House of Representatives 835 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Suite 230 Durango, Colorado 81301

Re: Hermosa Creek Legislation

Dear Congressman Tipton:

I am writing you to urge your support for the "Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection Act" that is expected to be introduced in the US Senate by Colorado Senator Bennett in the near future.

The legislation, as drafted, fairly represents the outcome and consensus recommendations of a multi-year open public process known as the Hermosa Creek Workgroup which is part of the River Protection Group regional initiative sponsored in part by the Southwestern Water Conservation District and San Juan Citizens Alliance. The Hermosa Creek public process and outcomes are described in the Hermosa Creek Workgroup Final Report.

It was my privilege to represent the interests of the Southwestern Water Conservation District and San Juan County, Colorado during this process. Interests of the Southwestern Water Conservation District included protecting existing water rights and uses; and, the potential for future water development. The interests of San Juan County included protecting existing water quality, county road access, mineral development potential, forest product harvesting, and recreational uses. Both the District and San Juan County have voted to support the proposed legislation.

The legislation, as drafted, is intended to protect the existing water quality of Hermosa Creek by appropriate land use protections while allowing existing and historical uses to continue including:

- Potential for future water development
- Forest Products harvesting in areas designated as suitable by the San Juan National Forest
- Mining in areas of known resources
- Livestock Grazing, including necessary facility support
- Urban Interface Fire Suppression including location of helicopter pads
- Multiple Recreational Uses (motorized, non-motorized, fishing, hunting, hiking, etc.)
- Protection of Wilderness Characteristics in part of the watershed.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Respectfully,

Stephen C. Fearn