

SEP 30 2003

COSTILLA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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Commissioner: Joseph C. Gallegos
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Commissioner: Frankin Kuhn
Member
District #2

August 15, 2003

Mark Udall, Member of Congress
1333 West 120th Avenue
Suite 210
Westminster, CO 80234

Dear Congressman Udall,

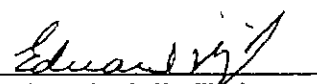
The Costilla County Commissioners are supportive of your bill (H.R. 1639) concerning claims based on RS 2477. Passed in 1866, we feel that RS 2477 is an antiquated law that was appropriately repealed by Congress in 1976. Moffat County's proposed plan to claim more than 2,000 miles of road rights across federal and private land has the ability to transform thousands of old, forgotten hiking trails and horse paths into new highways. Further, we feel this proposal can harm public lands, undermine private-property rights and hurt relations with Indian tribes.


We believe HR 1639 would set appropriate nationwide standards for how counties can claim highway rights in federal land. We also strongly support your bills prohibition of such roads through national parks, wildlife refugees and wilderness areas. These lands need to be protected precisely because of their near-roadless quality. We also agree that the bill's four-year deadline is appropriate and that those claiming to have rights based on RS 2477 should be prepared to assert their rights within another four years.

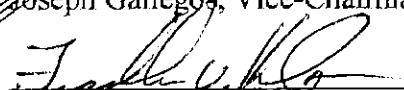
A legislative approach is the proper approach in handling the RS 2477 issue and this issue needs to be resolved in a way that takes into account the interest of all concerned, in Colorado and the rest of the nation.

Thank-you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,


Edward Vigil, Chairman


Joseph Gallegos, Vice-Chairman


Franklin Kuhn, Commissioner