

HOUSE COMMITTEE FAILS TO HONOR LOCAL HERMOSA WATERSHED CONSENSUS

Durango, CO – September 17, 2014 The House Committee on Natural Resources failed today to honor the community consensus on the protection of the Hermosa Creek watershed that was fashioned by diverse stakeholders over many years.

The Committee voted 22 to 18 to approve an amended version of the Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection Act (HR 1839), stripping many of the watershed protections and transferring management decisions from localized decision-making to Congressional dictates.

Unfortunately, Rep. Scott Tipton failed to support the community's consensus, which included very specific protective measures, by voting with the majority to severely alter the locally crafted legislation despite his previous indications that he would honor the legislation as he introduced it to Congress.

Numerous stakeholders involved in the Hermosa Workgroup process that spawned the legislation were incredulous that a "perfectly delivered" legislative process, created locally with near-unanimous support, could be bungled so badly as it moved forward in the House of Representatives. Mark Franklin, a La Plata County business owner, noted, "How possibly could a bipartisan supported piece of legislation to protect a locale so loved by locals be twisted into an effort to promote partisan public lands-related grudges? We were so confident that Rep. Tipton would say, 'My constituents fashioned this bill in harmony, I stand behind it, please pass it as I introduced it – no modifications are needed', but he did not."

The possibilities of resurrecting the legislation to reflect the community consensus are uncertain at this point. Jimbo Buickerood, San Juan Citizens Alliance's Public Lands Coordinator, stated "In the weeks ahead I'm sure Rep. Tipton will hear from his constituency "loud and clear" that the Hermosa Creek watershed is dear to us and we want it protected as we clearly indicated in the legislation we created. Hopefully from there the Congressman will lead the charge to make the necessary changes on the House floor or in conference to bring home a locally-fashioned prize, rather than a Washington DC designed edict."

ABOUT SAN JUAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE

The San Juan Citizens Alliance is a Four Corners-based non-profit founded in 1986 that organizes people to protect the water and air, lands, and character of the rural communities in the San Juan Basin.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Jimbo Buickerood

Public Lands Coordinator

970.259.3583 (ext 2) or 970.560.1111 (Cell)

jimbo@sanjuancitizens.org