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UDALL SAYS BUSH ROADLESS DECISION A 'FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP AND ABDICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY'

(WASHINGTON, D.C.)—Congressman Mark Udall (D-Eldorado Springs) today denounced the Bush administration for abandoning rules established by the Clinton administration for managing roadless areas in national forests.

“This is a significant step backwards for protecting the environment. States should have a voice in managing natural resources, but I think it’s a mistake to take a state-by-state approach for protecting roadless areas. Trees, wildlife, and fish don’t respect state boundaries, and I don’t think decisions about management of roadless areas – or other parts of the national forests – should be based on those lines, either,” said Udall.

Udall added that the Bush administration’s action fails to keep faith with the expectation of the American people who own these lands. “The national forests belong to all the American people and they have expressed broad support for protecting roadless areas. The federal government has a responsibility to be sensitive to state concerns about management of these lands, but it is a mistake to delegate roadless designation to the states.”

Today’s announcement, Udall said, demonstrates “a failure of leadership and an abdication of responsibility” and now Congress should act to correct this mistake and maintain needed protections for these important areas.

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