Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Jerry Goldsmith of Cedaredge on Colorado's western slope, appearing before you on behalf of the Western Colorado Wilderness Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee represents a very broad spectrum of Western Colorado interests. There are four multi-county Planning and Management Regions encompassing Western Colorado. The affairs of each of these regional councils are administered by a board of directors composed of elected officials from the city and county governments within the regions. Each of these four regions are represented on the Steering Committee. The Colorado River Water Conservation District and the Southwest Colorado Water Conservation District are charged under state statutes with the conservation and development of Western Colorado's water resources within their respective districts. Both of these water organizations are represented on the Steering Committee. The Colorado Rivers Council is a Western-Colorado-based organization concerned with the environmental values of Colorado's mountain rivers and streams, and is represented on the Steering Committee. Club 20, which I currently serve as president, is a citizens' organization concerned with the over-all economic, social and environmental well-being of the 21 counties situated west of the Continental Divide. Its policies are developed by a board of directors with membership from each community or town in Western Colorado.

One thing that sets this Steering Committee apart from some of the witnesses who have testified today is the fact that it represents people who live and make their living in Western Colorado where the Eagles Nest,
and two other proposed wilderness areas, are located.

Most, if not all, of the organizations making up the Western Colorado Wilderness Steering Committee had originally supported the Eagles Nest Wilderness bill introduced in the Senate by Senators Haskell and Dominick as S-1864. Even though acceptance of this bill meant that multiple-use resource development would be foreclosed over a rather large area, an overriding consideration was the protection afforded to Western Colorado's most precious resource: its magnificent land and water environment.

To our great dismay, the boundaries originally set forth in S-1864 were modified in the Senate Committee and Subcommittee so that when it passed the Senate approximately 93% (according to one of the Senate sponsors) of the water coveted by the Denver Water Board was still exposed to the danger of transmountain diversion, and the environment degradation associated therewith. So the net result of this wilderness bill was to lock up 128,000 acres of potential timber, mineral and recreational resources and at the same time make available for transmountain diversion approximately 150,000 acre feet annually of high quality water, thereby to be lost forever to its basin of origin.

Even though these modifications made it impossible for the organizations which I represent today to support the Senate bill, it still did not satisfy the demands of the Denver Water Board. In their zeal to have wilderness at any price, certain well-intentioned individuals who have our utmost respect for their dedication to their cause, undertook to further bargain away Western Colorado's water in exchange for the Denver Water Board's willingness to drop its opposition to the Senate bill. The spectacle of two Denver-based organizations soberly negotiating the future of Western Colorado was the catalyst which sparked the formation of the Western Colorado Wilderness Steering Committee.
Mr. Chairman, for the above-stated reasons, we strongly oppose S-1864 as passed by the Senate and further oppose any so-called compromises designed to make the bill more palatable to the Denver Water Board.

We recognize and fully understand the Subcommittee's reluctance to become enmeshed in special interest conflicts within the state. We are familiar with the argument that the Wilderness Act was not designed for use as a mechanism to accomplish other objectives. But isn't it fair to assume that the Subcommittee, and eventually the Congress, wishes to take action that benefits the government and the nation? I ask you to examine S-1864 in that context, and to consider the following:

A. According to data provided by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission, the federal government in this fiscal year is subsidizing the sewer programs of the Denver Metropolitan Area with appropriations in the amount of $43,800,000 in EPA grants. This is because Denver cannot handle the problems brought about by its policy of promoting uncontrolled growth. What possible benefit can accrue to the government, the nation or the people of Denver for that matter, in fueling additional uncontrolled growth by more transmountain water diversions?

B. Because of massive infusion of federal dollars in waste water treatment, HUD has released substantial amounts of grant and loan insurance funds for housing, thereby abetting the proliferation of uncontrolled growth in the metropolitan area. How does it benefit the nation to have its legislative bodies gerrymander wilderness boundaries to enable a city, already beset with housing problems it cannot cope with, to divert even more water away from an area which is expected to produce food, fiber and energy for the ever-increasing metropolitan populations of the United States?
C. The Congress has recently authorized the expenditure of $27,000,000 to begin a program to alleviate salt concentrations in the Mexicali Valley of Mexico and the Lower Basin of the Colorado River. How can it possibly benefit the government and the nation to allow massive quantities of pure, high-quality water to be diverted off the top of Colorado's high mountain streams to aggravate the already serious salinity problem in the Colorado River?

The foregoing are a few reasons why we believe there is a significant federal interest in this troublesome matter, and why it is not possible to disassociate wilderness boundary considerations from this problem.

Who are the winners and who are the losers if S-1864 in its present form is adopted by the Congress?

The people who live and make their living in Western Colorado, both presently and in the future, are losers by being deprived of water supplies for expanded agricultural, industrial, domestic and recreational needs.

The people who live in Denver are losers because of the increased congestion, pollution, crime and other adversities which accrue from uncontrolled and unmanageable growth.

The people who have worked so hard to establish wilderness areas to be enjoyed in their natural state are losers because of the depletion and desecration of Colorado's beautiful mountain streams and the water environment, when wilderness boundaries are moved for the specific purpose of permitting such exploitation.

The irrigators of farm lands in the Lower Colorado River Basin and the Grand Valley of Western Colorado are losers to the extent that the
increased diversion of high quality headwaters out of the basin to Eastern Colorado increases the concentration of total dissolved solids in the Colorado River.

Perhaps of greatest significance to the Subcommittee, all the people of this nation are losers as more and more subsidies are required to sustain metropolitan governments and services, and to overcome problems that frequently have their roots in legislation which contributes to the build-up of metropolitan centers and to the disadvantage of rural areas. As a case in point, I respectfully refer you to the testimony of the Hinsdale County Commissioners regarding the proposed Weminuche Wilderness Area beginning on Page 277 of the record of hearings held by the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands in Denver on July 11, 1974, testimony which so far seems to have gone unheeded in legislative deliberations on this matter.

Getting back to the Eagles Nest, I have identified a multitude of losers if S-1864 is adopted by the Congress in its present form. Having been unable to identify any winners, I will leave that task to the proponents of the Senate bill.

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of all the organizations listed at the beginning of this testimony, I urge you to favorably consider HR 8843, introduced by Congressman Jim Johnson of Colorado, designating the Eagles Nest Wilderness. This position is unanimously supported by all members of the Western Colorado Wilderness Steering Committee.

I should now like to briefly discuss the Steering Committee's position on the Flat Tops Wilderness Area.

After researching individual situations in which several private headgates and diversion facilities were caught within the boundaries of the Senate-passed bill, taking a look at non-conforming uses within the proposed
boundary, and carefully reviewing the status of current water development programs, the Committee recommends that the Flat Tops Wilderness be established along the boundaries designated in S-702 as passed by the Senate, but modified in accordance with adjustments suggested by the Forest Service in response to the Subcommittee staff request to the Forest Service to delineate the most critical areas of management concerns and non-conforming uses. It is our understanding that a map depicting the boundaries contained in S-702, and on the same map depicting the above-mentioned modifications, has been provided by the Forest Service to your Subcommittee. To avoid misunderstanding, we have provided to the Subcommittee staff a map on which the specific boundary we are recommending is designated by a broad yellow line.

Before proceeding it is necessary to inform you that the consensus position outlined above is not concurred in by the Colorado Rivers Council with regard to one of the suggested exclusions. The Colorado Rivers Council is a valued member of the Western Colorado Wilderness Steering Committee and I understand that its minority report on this one item will be given in separate testimony.

Since much of the technical data on which our conclusions are based has already been presented to you in the statement of the Colorado River Water Conservation District, I would like to go directly to the one thorny issue which seems to be bothering a good many thoughtful individuals in considering the Flat Tops boundaries, and attempt to dispel a popular misconception.

The Steering Committee is recommending that an area of approximately 4000 acres on the South Fork of the White River be excluded from the wilderness area pending completion of studies under a Federal Power Commission permit to determine the suitability of a site in the South Fork Canyon for a hydroelectric facility. It has been said that because we favor boundaries that may be prejudicial to some water development plans in certain instances, and then recommend boundaries that are
solicitous of certain other water projects, that we are guilty of inconsistency. I would like to lay that misconception firmly to rest. In the first place, I would not like to think that we will ever become so stereotyped as to adopt some kind of narrow philosophical approach that must be applied blindly to all wilderness proposals. I would prefer to think that we will study each proposal carefully on its own merits, as we have done in each of the 3 proposed Colorado areas now before the Congress. Such an approach has led us to favor a larger area for Eagles Nest than that contained in the Senate Bill, an area slightly smaller than that provided in S-702 for the Flat Tops, and a much smaller area for the Weminuche than that designated by the Senate. I feel it is unfortunate, incidentally, that further testimony is not being taken on the Weminuche in Southwest Colorado. In any event, the decisions reached by the Steering Committee on these 3 areas came about through careful evaluation of all the tangible and intangible effects of the proposed legislation on our local communities, our counties and the over-all interests of Western Colorado, and of course the factors and circumstances vary widely in each of the 3 areas. This balancing of values is logical, reasonable and certainly consistent.

There is another strong thread of consistency woven throughout our positions on these proposals, and that is our unalterable opposition to further transversion of water out of its basins of origin in Western Colorado. We believe that there are identifiable national interests, as stated earlier, that should be taken into account on this question. On the other hand, we wholeheartedly encourage the in-basin development of water resources which has converted barren deserts to productive orchards, ranches and farms in Western Colorado. Your Subcommittee is no doubt familiar with a recent report of an Interior Department Study Team which gives some insight into the critical water requirements of energy development on the Colorado River and its tributaries.

For the above-listed reasons, and because strict environmental safeguards are contained in the power study permit, we believe it to be the wisest
course to delay the inclusion of that portion of the South Fork Canyon in the wilderness designation until such time as a determination is made concerning comparative resource development and wilderness values.

Over the past several months many hours have been spent and many miles have been travelled in reaching this consensus of Western Colorado interests. There are many diverse opinions and we make no pretension of speaking for everyone. We do believe however that the foregoing is as fair a representation of Western Colorado needs and desires as it is humanly possible to get, and we also believe it is compatible with the national interest. We sincerely hope it will be of some value in your deliberations.

Thank you for your courtesy.