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August 1, 2002

James L. Connaughton
Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Mr. Connaughton:

The July 9, 2002 Federal Register notice announced that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) task force, recently established by the Council on Environmental Quality, is reviewing a variety of issues related to NEPA processes and implementation. Horst Greczmiel of your staff kindly provided a preliminary briefing for a number of the groups listed below earlier this week, and we appreciate his willingness to do that.

As we discussed with Mr. Greczmiel, the Federal Register notice specifically requests public comments in five key areas related to NEPA environmental analysis on or before August 23, 2002. All of the groups listed below are very much interested in the work of the task force and appreciate the opportunity to provide comments.

However, we are concerned that, given the breadth of the issue areas involved, and the importance of our consultation with both national and field staff working with NEPA, we will be unable to provide the most thorough and productive response to your request by the stated deadline.

Thus, we respectfully request that the deadline for submitting comments be extended from August 23, 2002 until September 23, 2002. In addition, in order to make our comments most relevant to the issues that the task force will consider, it would be very helpful to have comments or other information received before the end of the comment period posted on the web site for public review as received. Information provided by agencies participating in the task force would be particularly important in this regard.

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Thank you in advance for considering these requests.

Sincerely,

William Snape
Legal Director
Defenders of Wildlife

Craig Obey
Vice President for Government Affairs
National Parks Conservation Association

Joan Mulhern
Senior Legislative Counsel
Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund

Jim Lyon
Director of Congressional Affairs
National Wildlife Federation

John Bowman
Legal Counsel
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Lexi Shultz
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Mineral Policy Center

Randall Snodgrass
Director of Government Relations
World Wildlife Fund

Perry Plumart
Director of Government Relations
National Audubon Society

Kevin Curtis
Vice President for Government Relations
National Environmental Trust

cc: NEPA Task Force
P.O. Box 221150
Salt Lake City, UT 84122

Horst Greczmiel
CEQ

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