Dear Ms. Hankins, Ms. Armstrong, and Ms. Sharrow:

We understand that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) is currently working to revise its Resource Management Plan (RMP) for our area. As outlined in the North Fork Alternative Plan, we recognize that there are many important, existing uses on the public lands in our area. We encourage the BLM to find a responsible, common sense approach to oil and gas development. While the Town recognizes the importance and necessity of energy development, we feel that it must be done in a responsible way. With this perspective in mind, the Town of Crawford is writing to express our support for the North Fork Alternative Plan in the areas related to Crawford, more specifically those aspects of the plan that would impact resources important to the Town.

Of the highest importance to the town is our ability to provide clean and safe drinking water to town residents. As we have stated to the BLM in the past, with respect to previously proposed lease sales, public lands managed by the BLM are near and intertwined with our drinking water supply and delivery system. For obvious reasons, the town’s drinking water supply must be protected from an industrial activity that has the potential for pollution by spills, releases, equipment failure, human error and other potentially unknown and unintended consequences related to gas and oil drilling and the use of high volume hydraulic fracturing. Contamination of the Town’s drinking water supply or damage to its delivery system cannot be allowed to occur.

In addition, the Town would like to underscore the importance of maintaining and operating its wastewater system. Crawford utilizes a BLM right of way that provides access to its wastewater treatment plant. In addition, Crawford has a wastewater collection main that borders BLM-managed lands. It is vitally important to the future of the town that our ability to maintain and continue wastewater treatment at this facility is not impeded by oil and gas activity. The town is supportive of BLM’s multiple use mandate. A perfect example of this mandate in action can be found in Young’s Peak. The BLM lands that border the town on the north include Young’s Peak. This peak provides the scenic backdrop for our town, a hiking trail that provides recreation for town residents, and these lands are right next to Crawford School. Surely this is an area where the BLM can agree that it
would be inappropriate to lease for the industrial practice of oil and gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing. The Town appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the BLM’s decision-making process. While we recognize and understand the importance of energy development, we also recognize our mandate as town trustees to protect the health and safety of town residents. While we cannot speak for the entire plan for the North Fork Valley, we do agree with the portion of the North Fork Alternative Plan in regards to the Crawford area springs, wastewater facility and Youngs’ Peak area.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Steckel
Mayor
The Town of Crawford, Colorado

cc:
Neil Kornze, Principal Deputy Director, Bureau of Land Management
Senator Michael Bennet
Senator Mark Udall
Representative Scott Tipton
Governor John Hickenlooper
Delta County Board of Commissioners