HOUSE RESOLUTION 16-1007

CONCERNING EXPANSION OF THE PINON CANYON MANEUVER SITE.

WHEREAS, The Pinon Canyon maneuver site, located on over two hundred thirty-five thousand acres in southeastern Colorado, opened in 1985, and, combined with Fort Carson's training areas, is the second largest department of defense maneuver training site in the nation for soldiers from Fort Carson and other military bases; and

WHEREAS, The area that makes up the Pinon Canyon maneuver site is home to a diverse ecosystem of big and small game, fisheries, and non-game wildlife, and also boasts displays of forest, rangeland, and mineral resources; and

WHEREAS, The Pinon Canyon maneuver site also provides demonstrable evidence of almost four thousand years of human history, and several hundred properties on the site are eligible for designation on the national register of historic places, including ninety-eight archeological sites; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the creation of the Pinon Canyon maneuver site, the land area was lightly populated and devoted almost exclusively
to ranching and livestock grazing, sometimes by families that had owned their land within the site area for generations; and 

WHEREAS, Purchase of the land that became the Pinon Canyon maneuver site was completed in 1983 and approximately half of the land area that became the site was acquired by the department of the Army by condemnation as many landowners were unwilling sellers; and

WHEREAS, The optimal way to ensure that the magnificent and rare natural and human treasures of the Pinon Canyon maneuver site are preserved for future generations would be to require the United States Army to complete an environmental impact assessment for expansion of the maneuver site area and for Congress to pass laws to pay landowners the full measure of the compensation they are owed for these lands; and

WHEREAS, Senator Cory Gardner, when he was a Congressman in the United States House of Representatives, offered an amendment to the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013" that would have required this assessment by the United States Army and subsequent vote by Congress; and

WHEREAS, Section 8 (17) of article I of the United States Constitution allows the state legislatures to withdraw consent by a state to the exercise by the federal government of exclusive jurisdiction over particular land and the state of Colorado has not given its consent to the acquisition of, or exclusive jurisdiction over, land sought by the United States department of defense for purposes associated with the expansion of the Pinon Canyon maneuver site; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventieth General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

(1) That any plans that the federal government may have for the expansion of the Pinon Canyon maneuver site should allow for and incorporate community input; and

(2) It is important for Congress to remember that the state of Colorado retains sovereignty over any decisions made regarding land within its territorial boundaries and that the Colorado General Assembly, per section 8 (17) of article I of the United States Constitution, must give its consent to any expansion of the Pinon Canyon maneuver site by the federal government.