

**FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE (Monday, April 01, 2013):**

**Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces Supports HR 995, Organ Mountains National Monument Establishment Act of 2013**

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The Board of Directors of the Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces is pleased to announce its support for HR 995, the Organ Mountains National Monument Establishment Act of 2013 introduced by Congressman Steve Pearce.

Kirk Clifton, President stated that “The Board of Directors support this Act as it will ensure the continued protection of one of New Mexico’s most majestic and recognizable mountain ranges – the Organ Mountains.” Clifton further stated that “the Board agreed that this legislation will not only protect our precious mountains, but ensure their status as a National Monument for generations to come. This Act has been authored in an intelligent manner that addresses the only area of need for protection in our region as a National Monument. Although the mountains are already protected by the vast ownership of the Federal Government, this status will ensure additional measures of protection.”

As a Chamber of Commerce, we cannot support the alternative legislation that may attempt to encumber additional lands that do not fit the criteria of a National Monument and that will physically constrict our region from growing into an economic center within an emerging part of the United States – the Southwest. This alternative proposal includes approximately 600,000 acres and is excessive and completely unnecessary. It is in essence a “land grab” that will further restrict the growth of Southern New Mexico thus preventing the economic, societal, agricultural, and cultural growth and traditions that will be required for the many years to come. The constituents of Southern New Mexico should understand that much of this land is already protected by State and Federal ownership in addition to much of it being included within “Wilderness Study Areas” – as it has been for many years. Additionally, this proposal will inhibit many of our ranchers within the region from conducting the very business they have known for generations.

The Board of Directors respectfully requests HR 995 be considered for a recommendation of approval and signature by our elected delegation of the State of New Mexico to President Barack Obama.