

HIDALGO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

405 Duncan Hwy.
Lordsburg, NM 88045
(575) 542-9141 x116

November 20, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument

Dear President Obama:

With the exception of Lordsburg and Virden, the Hidalgo Soil and Water Conservation District includes all of Hidalgo County as well as a portion of southwestern Grant County. The latter includes the Redrock Valley. Our Board is charged by New Mexico statute with the management of the soil and water resources within that area. Such management has far reaching affects including the well being of the wildlife that inhabit lands within our administrative boundaries.

Representing district residents, this Board is adamantly against the designation of the Organ Mountain Desert Peaks National Monument. We do not believe the designation accurately reflects the needs of rural New Mexico as a whole. Rather, it sets a very dangerous precedent for the entire state.

Regardless of the representations to the contrary, the designation will remove a large piece of property from any productive use. The private property owners, the BLM permit owners, and the state lease holders within this area have been minimized and left unrepresented in their legitimate concerns. Dismissing every argument by those who have duties, responsibilities, and investments on those lands is not only alarming, it is unacceptable.

This is of great concern to our District. We believe the same thing could now happen at any time within our boundaries. We also believe any 600,000 acre monument designation under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906 has no justification. The Act, with the intention of designation of "the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected", is intended for a specific purpose. It has no moral authority to triple the total acreage of national monuments within the state of New Mexico.

The national security matter also remains unresolved. Our District overlays the only Arizona class smuggling corridor in the nation outside of Arizona. We know what safe havens within these corridors produce. How and why Senator Bingaman and Senator Udall continue to reject any notion of our concern regarding this pending disaster no longer makes sense to us.

We are the definitive local governance in the matter of these resource concerns. Federal law clearly serves to protect our best interests. You must defend those rights that we hold dearly. Please understand our insistence that this monstrosity cannot be enacted on the basis of political spoils. Such an act tarnishes everything you have worked to achieve.

Sincerely,



Walt Anderson
Chairman
Hidalgo Soil and Water Conservation District