

# Doña Ana County Sheriffs Dept.



845 N. Motel Blvd.  
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88007

*Todd Garrison, Sheriff*

**CHARACTER  
COUNTS!**<sup>SM</sup>

*Chuck Franco, Undersheriff*

June 12, 2007

Congressman Stevan Pearce  
C/o Grant A. Olson  
1607 Longworth Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Wilderness Issues in Las Cruces/Dona Ana County

Dear Congressman Stevan Pearce,

I am writing this letter, to advise you of my concern regarding the wilderness issues in Dona Ana County. In September/October of 2006, I attended a meeting regarding the wilderness issues which was hosted by the City of Las Cruces and conducted across the county.

I attended a scheduled meeting in the Anthony area where I listened to the concerns of people for and against the wilderness issue. I learned from this meeting that there was a push to have the Wilderness Study Areas turned into Wilderness Areas. When I learned of this, I did express my concerns, because I felt that this county would be directly affected by this change.

By making this area a wilderness, it will keep the normal traffic from the area. As you are aware, there will be very limited or no vehicular traffic allowed due to it being a wilderness. The area discussed and in question goes from the border of Mexico and picks up again heading north towards I-10 towards the Hatch area. I feel this has the potential to open up the area making it a well-protected border crossing spot for illegal aliens and terrorist, with them being able to cross undetected. I have seen what has happened along the border in Arizona where it also has been turned into a wilderness area, and because of this, I, as Sheriff, had concerns for county residents.

I did express to the group that I would very much like to be on the board conducting research and gathering information about the wilderness concerns, due to the fact I felt no one was looking into this from a law enforcement point of view. There is, however, a very important gas line and railroad in the areas discussed which, if not properly secured, could be of grave concern to the Southwest. I was told by the group conducting the interview that because I was the Sheriff and was in a political position, I could not be considered to be a part of the group discussions. I am not sure what being the Sheriff and being concerned about the safety of this county has to do with politics; it does not seem to pose a problem with any other decision I make.

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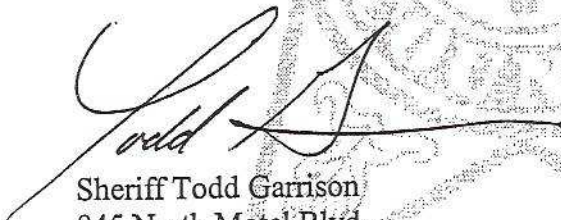
*A. B. G. 6/16/07*

I have to be honest: I feel this entire thing is politically motivated and is being run by those involved to bring their intentions to fruition. If this was not the case, they would look at this issue from every aspect, with law enforcement and the security of our nation at the top of that list. Excluding law enforcement from this is, in my opinion, one of the biggest mistakes made in this entire process. It was obvious to me that after that meeting there was no attempt made to notify law enforcement of the meetings being held. I feel they went out of their way to make sure we did not know about them. The only ones they consistently invited were Border Patrol and BLM, who spoke about the Border/Wilderness and how they would take care of any problems.

I think we both know they can only do only so much-look at our border now. The county will end up taking care of all the illegals dying in the desert from exposure and dealing with the increase of smuggling people and drugs, which will occur because we will be unable to properly patrol our county if it is a Wilderness Area. I do not understand why we are trying to create a wilderness area. It is, at this time already, a wilderness study area and should not be changed.

If there is anything I can do to further assist you in this matter, please let me know.

Respectfully,



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