

April 3, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: The Organ Mountain Desert Peaks Monument proposal

Dear President Obama and Secretary Jewell:

The American cattle industry leads the world in the production of the highest quality beef and is the largest sector of American agriculture. Our industry has always set the standard other producing nations follow. We must all be proud of our producers, family farmers and ranchers, and stand with them in matters that affect their ability to grow and provide unparalleled red meat production.

Initiated in 1898, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is the largest and oldest marketing organization and trade association for America's cattle farmers and ranchers. NCBA is a consumer-focused, producer-directed organization representing the largest segment of the nation's food and fiber industry. NCBA represents 170,000 of America's farmers, ranchers and cattlemen including through our affiliates such as the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association (NMCGA). NCBA and NMCGA remain vigilant of matters across the country and in New Mexico that have the potential to threaten our producer's operations and their ability to pass them along to the next generation. One such threat is vast Monument designations under the Antiquities Act and in this case the proposed Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument.

Recent Presidential Proclamations have contained language that is harmful to the public lands livestock industry by not including livestock grazing in the purposes section yet requiring that industry to be "consistent" with the other purposes listed. This creates a two-tiered management system, where the resources listed in the purposes section are the dominant use, and all other uses (including grazing) are subservient. This means whenever the managing agency seeks to "conserve, protect and enhance" any of the other uses listed and there is a potential (perceived or real) conflict with a grazing practice, grazing will be either diminished or eliminated. If a current ranching practice is determined to be in conflict, it will have to be discontinued. If a rancher proposes a range improvement project or any other new activity which is determined to be in conflict, it will be disallowed. This is far from the multiple-use concept under which these lands have been successfully managed.

As a result, we respectfully make the following requests in this matter. First and foremost we ask that you forgo a proclamation to designate this area as a national monument and instead allow the legislative process to continue so these issues and the concerns of other multiple use industries may have a full and open debate. However, should you chose to exercise the limited authority provided by the Antiquities Act to designate a monument; we request that you either include livestock grazing in the purposes section or not include consistency language to ensure customary operating practices and livestock grazing shall continue.

The beef industry is one of those American partnerships that has endured and provided jobs, heritage and the best protein source in the world. Help us maintain that position today and strengthen it in our tomorrows.

Respectfully,

Bob McCann
President
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

Jose Varela Lopez
President
New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association

cc: Senator Udall, Senator Heinrich, Representative Lujan Grisham, Representative Pearce, Representative Lujan