



May 8, 2013

The Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Re: HR.995 Organ Mountains National Monument Establishment Act

Dear Chairman Bishop:

Western Heritage Alliance is an organization of 791 businesses established in Dona Ana County, New Mexico, whose mission is to preserve, promote and protect the farming, ranching and rural heritage of our western lands. We support HR 995, "Organ Mountains National Monument Establishment Act", introduced by Congressman Steve Pearce. The Organ Mountains deserve permanent protection and this bill provides a common sense approach for protection. We also approve land-use designations being debated in open testimony and approved by Congress and then signed by the President, not designated under provisions of the Antiquities Act of 1906.

The bill as written will protect approximately 54,888 acres of land from disposal, trade, development, sale, mineral exploration, leasing or mining, including geo-thermal. This provision will address the major concerns of the citizens of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County, New Mexico.

Grazing by livestock on these lands will continue just as it has for over 400 years. The legislation also provides for the use of mechanical equipment and motorized vehicles in the construction or maintenance of range improvements or performance of standard ranching practices. Flood control and water conservation systems will also be provided access for use of equipment in the construction, maintenance and operation needed for public safety and the conservation of scarce water resources.

Just as important is that the bill addresses the ability of law enforcement to have unfettered access to the entire national monument. Full access by law enforcement personnel from Federal, State and local officers will go a long way to providing improved border security and public safety near our porous international boundary with Mexico.

The bill will also protect valid water rights and the rights of way and will not allow for new roads, except for public safety or resource protection. The bill will also allow hunting in the monument.

We fully support the passage of HR 995, which will preserve and protect the iconic backdrop to the Organ Mountains for the citizens of Las Cruces and all visitors to enjoy in perpetuity.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Schickedanz', is written over the typed name.

Jerry G. Schickedanz, Chairman  
Western Heritage Alliance