

**COMMITTEE ON
FINANCIAL SERVICES**

SUBCOMMITTEES:

CAPITAL MARKETS AND
GOVERNMENT SPONSORED ENTERPRISES

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER CREDIT

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

WESTERN CAUCUS

CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



STEVAN PEARCE
Second District, New Mexico

2432 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

OFFICE NUMBERS

(575) 522-0771 NEW MEXICO
(202) 225-2365 WASHINGTON, D.C.

WWW.PEARCE.HOUSE.GOV

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/REPSTEVEPEARCE

WWW.TWITTER.COM/REPSTEVEPEARCE

WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/NMSTEVEPEARCE

January 24, 2014

Secretary Jewell, Senator Udall and Senator Heinrich:

Thank you for holding this public listening session on the protection of the Organ Mountains. The Organ Mountains are a true natural treasure in Southern New Mexico, and one of our state's most pristine, recognizable sites. We can all agree that they must be protected for future generations. It's encouraging to see so many here today, coming together for the protection of this iconic landmark.

Secretary Jewell, thank you for making the trip to New Mexico. I appreciate your commitment to hearing the voices of the community. I hope that you will take the time to listen to everyone's feedback, and consider all viewpoints presented here. As I am confident you will learn today, how to best protect the Organs is an incredibly complex question, with centuries of history, and a group of stakeholders as diverse as New Mexico itself. These stakeholders have admirably come together, investing untold hours and resources to craft legislation that protects our natural heritage, and does so with an eye to the needs of the community. It is so important that they are given the opportunity to complete that process through the legislative system, working with their elected representatives.

As you are aware, I sponsored H.R. 995, the *Organ Mountains National Monument Establishment Act*. I have sponsored similar legislation in previous Congresses, and I have been proud to see my proposal evolve and progress with the feedback and involvement of the people of New Mexico. It is imperative that any land management plan have the backing of the local community. The writing of this bill has brought together ranchers, conservationists, public officials, business owners, and interested citizens for a common purpose. It is a local solution.

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H.R. 995 protects the Organ Mountains forever. The Monument will forever be a part of the National Landscape Conservation System. Mineral exploration will be banned. Watersheds will be preserved. Motorized vehicle use will be carefully proscribed to protect the environment, while promoting access thorough designated roads, so that all can enjoy our beloved mountains. The needs of the agricultural community—a New Mexico tradition and way of life dating back centuries—are carefully balanced with the goals and needs of responsible conservation.

All these aspects of the bill—and countless others—have been painstakingly crafted over the course of years by collaboration among local organizations, leaders, stakeholders, and citizens. H.R. 995 is a strong, effective proposal because of the thousands of voices that created it. If the legislative process is not permitted to continue, those voices will be silenced, and the balance they selflessly worked to find for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be lost.

When we rise above politics and all work together, we can reach our shared goals. I sponsored H.R. 995 to protect what we all treasure: the Organ Mountains. I respectfully request that the Department of the Interior honor the wishes of our community. The best way to form a collaborative agreement that respects the needs of all our constituents is to let the legislative process run its course.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stevan Pearce".

Steve Pearce
Member of U.S. Congress