

June 10th, 2016

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Udall and Senator Heinrich,

We write to thank you for your leadership on preserving New Mexico's most iconic landscapes. Specifically, we deeply appreciate your tireless efforts that led to President Obama's designation of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. As business owners, we know protected public lands are an economic driver. Las Cruces was recently included in Lonely Planet's Top 10 Places to Visit list, thanks largely to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. Since 2015, the Town of Mesilla's tax revenues have jumped over 20 percent and Las Cruces' Lodgers tax revenues are up. More tourists are spending more nights in local hotels, and increased visitation to the national monument is a leading driver. It is clear to us that permanent protection for this special place is boosting our economy and creating jobs.

As you know, there are eight wilderness study areas and two citizen proposed wilderness areas in the heart of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. They have the best habitat, healthiest plant and animal populations, and are essential to healthy watersheds. Protecting them creates new ways to share our natural and cultural treasures. We are grateful for the protection afforded by the recent national monument designation, but these most sensitive special areas merit the protection Wilderness Act provides; achievable only by Congress.

Wilderness designation for these areas is integral to our community's vision of protection for the region. The inclusion of provisions to establish these areas as wilderness in the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Conservation Act of 2013 and previous legislation shows that you share that vision. As a united voice of almost 60 businesses, we applaud your continued efforts to protect this special place and thank you for reintroducing legislation that would complete the proposal to protect the area by designating wilderness areas within the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

Sincerely,

Smart Living Team

The Copier Guy

Spirit Winds Coffee Bar and Gift Source

Energy Works

Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce

Mountain View Market Co-Op

La Mexicana

AAAxtrême Steam

JC's Tortas

Korzan Oils

Advanced Automotive

La Tienda de Los Niños

Martin Tire Co.

Infinity Greens Lawn Painting & Landscaping

Forever Nutrition

Crystal Blue DJ and Karaoke

Ciros Restaurant

Diverse Nutrition

Burger Nook

DJ Dreamer Daydreamer Productions

The Portrait Place

From the Ground Up

Law Office of Matt Madrid

Picture Frame Factory Outlet

Wild Child Creations

Creative Consulting Solutions

Friends of the Organ Mountains

Poison Ink

Flowerama

Palamora Productions

Finish Line Car Audio and Tint

Nena's Salon

Sounds Unique

La Milpa Restaurant

Tutti Bambini

The Truck Farm

Unbreakable Tattoo Studio

V Panda LLC

The Body Shop

Kuts and Kurls Hair Salon

Ilusiones Beauty Salon

Diamond Kutz Barbershop

Safehaven Animal Sanctuary Thrift Store

Sleep Gallery

Ken Stinnet Photography

Boba Café

Mesilla Book Center

Tesoro Integrated Health Center

Williams Tile Overture

Sun and Earth, Inc

Moonbow Alterations

Creative Harmony

Everything Painted

Gold Medal Taekwondo

Blue Gate Fine Art Gallery

Happy Dog