

December 13th, 2024

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Debra Haaland, Secretary
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20242

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250



Dear President Biden, Secretary Haaland, and Secretary Vilsack:

I am writing on behalf of the Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce. One of our accomplishments is being recognized as an advocate for local economies positively impacted by our protected public lands.

I write to formally express the Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce's enthusiastic support for national monument designation of the Caja del Rio, 106,883 acres of the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service public lands southwest of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

We make this request in solidarity with and support of diverse interests in New Mexico including [Tribes and Pueblos](#), Hispano communities, [local governments](#), grazing permittees, chambers of commerce, business owners, faith leaders, sportsmen/women, veterans, and outdoor recreation, community, youth, and conservation organizations.

The Caja del Rio includes one of America's most iconic landscapes and an area of profound cultural, historical, archaeological, and ecological significance. With cacti forests, burrowing owls, bald and golden eagles, herds of elk and deer, and black bears and cougars, the Caja del Rio serves as critical wildlife habitat and a lynchpin of wildlife connectivity in the Upper Rio Grande.

The area's human history is as vibrant and diverse as the ruggedly beautiful landscape. Since time immemorial the Caja del Rio has been home to various Indigenous communities and contains thousands of Native American petroglyphs as well as significant cultural, spiritual, and archaeological sites. The area is also home to the National Historic Trail of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro as well as an iconic stretch of Route 66.

The Caja del Rio is one of the most endangered landscapes in New Mexico and the American Southwest, facing many threats including illegal dumping, desecration of sacred cultural resources, mining, and user created roads. Permanent protection will help address many of these threats.

We urge you to act while there is still time to ensure this iconic landscape is given the attention and protection it deserves.

Sincerely,

Carrie Hamblen
CEO/President
Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce

CC:

U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (NM)

U.S. Ben Ray Luján (NM)

U.S. Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez (NM-03)