

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 29, 2012

Taos County Commissioner Larry Sanchez (District II): 575.737.6314

Taos County Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo (District IV): 575.770.6179

### **Taos Community Leaders Praise Sen. Bingaman, Sen. Udall for Championing Protection of Rio Grande del Norte as a National Monument**

TAOS, N.M. – Elected officials in Taos County today praised U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman and U.S. Sen. Tom Udall for sending a joint letter late last week to President Obama, seeking presidential action to protect the Rio Grande del Norte.

“Senator Bingaman and Senator Udall continue to champion the protection of the Rio Grande del Norte,” Taos County Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo said. “Even the political stalemate in Congress can’t dissuade them from fighting for our economy and our cultural heritage, and all of Taos County joins me in appreciation.”

The senators’ letter to President Obama, dated October 25, 2012, voices support for presidential action on behalf of both the Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act and the Organ Mountains--Doña Ana County Conservation and Protection Act. The senators are sponsors of stalled legislation to protect both culturally-significant areas of the state. “We will continue to work to advance legislation in the Senate to conserve these important areas in New Mexico, but in the absence of any certainty about the passage of legislation, we believe you should work with local communities to explore how a National Monument designation would protect the archeological and cultural resources in these two regions,” the letter states.

“I support the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument as a county commissioner, and as a veteran,” said Taos County Commissioner Larry Sanchez. “These lands matter for our water supplies, our livestock, our tourism economy, and our outdoor way of life. But the Rio Grande del Norte also offers healing to veterans returning from war, and a respite for all of us. I commend our senators for urging the president to act where Congress has not, and protect a place integral to our community.”

The designation of Rio Grande del Norte as a national monument has broad local support, including the Taos County Commission, the town of Taos, the mayor of Questa, the Taos and Mora Chambers of Commerce, the Taos Green Chamber of Commerce, the city of Santa Fe, and local small business owners.

Legislation to protect Rio Grande del Norte was first introduced in the U.S. Senate by Colorado’s U.S. Sens. Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall in 2009. U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján and Martin Heinrich first introduced similar legislation in 2010 in the U.S. House.

###



## Taos County Resolution No. 2009-23

TAOS COUNTY  
ELAINE S. MONTANO, CLERK  
000353043  
Book 683 Page 542  
1 of 2  
05/19/2009 02:08:48 PM  
BY AMYR

### Endorsing S. 874, El Río Grande Del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act

**Whereas**, the proposed El Río Grande Del Norte National Conservation Area in Taos County is an area of extraordinary scenic, environmental, economic, cultural, and recreational value; and

**Whereas**, this legislation would designate 235,980 acres of public land in and around Taos County as a National Conservation Area to be managed by the Bureau of Land Management (NCA); and

**Whereas**, the Conservation Area includes two wilderness areas – the 8,000-acre Río San Antonio Wilderness and the 13,420-acre Cerro del Yuta Wilderness; and

**Whereas**, the Conservation Area includes the upper reaches of the Rio Grande Gorge, previously designated as a Wild and Scenic River, and protects elk wintering grounds and a migratory corridor for wildlife including birds of prey; and

**Whereas**, visitors and residents of Taos County today enjoy these public lands for hiking, camping, river rafting, photography, mountain climbing, grazing, hunting, fishing, bird watching, skiing, piñon picking, firewood collection, scenic enjoyment and other uses; and

**Whereas**, recreation and other uses of the public lands of Taos County are a vital part of the economy; and

**Whereas**, designating these public lands as a National Conservation Area would better protect their scenic, ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational values in perpetuity from the adverse effects of future development; and

**Whereas**, the Conservation Area furthers the goals of the Taos County Growth Management Plan; and


**Whereas**, the Conservation Area will be included as a unit of the National Landscape Conservation System making it eligible for additional funding that may be used for grassland restoration projects; and


**Whereas**, the Conservation Area will ensure that these public lands will be conserved and enhanced for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE TAOS COUNTY COMMISSION that the Commission recommends that Congress enact S. 874, El Rio Grande Del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act, and that the legislation include appropriate language to protect the Rio San Antonio Wilderness and the Cerro del Yuta Wilderness in order to protect their scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational values.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 19th DAY OF MAY, 2009.

THE BOARD OF TAOS  
 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
 Daniel R. Barrone, Chairman

  
 Joe Mike Duran, Vice-Chairman  
 ABSENT

Andrew Chavez, Commissioner  
 ABSENT


Charlie J. Gonzales, Commissioner

  
 Nicklos E. Jaramillo, Commissioner

Approved as to form:

  
 FOR Sammy L. Pacheco, County Attorney

Attest:

  
 Elaine S. Montano, County Clerk



| Vote Record: |            |    |         |               |
|--------------|------------|----|---------|---------------|
|              | Yes        | No | Abstain | Absent        |
| D. Barrone   | <u>Yes</u> |    |         |               |
| J.M. Duran   | <u>Yes</u> |    |         |               |
| A. Chavez    | Yes        | No | Abstain | <u>Absent</u> |
| C. Gonzales  | Yes        | No | Abstain | <u>Absent</u> |
| N. Jaramillo | <u>Yes</u> |    |         |               |





**TAOS COUNTY  
RESOLUTION 2016-62**

TAOS COUNTY  
ANNA MARTINEZ, CLERK  
000417219  
Book 933 Page 13  
1 of 2  
12/20/2016 01:22:48 PM  
BY AMNDAA

**A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF  
NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS TO TAOS COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, Taos County has a wealth of spectacular high-alpine landscapes and ecosystems, including rivers, forests, wetlands, meadows and other natural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, these public lands within the county are the basis of our quality of life, offering extensive public cultural and recreational opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, Americans from across the nation visit our public lands to participate in activities like hiking, hunting, fishing and camping and thereby support our local and state economies; and

**WHEREAS**, Taos County government works collaboratively with the United States Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the New Mexico State Parks Division, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, municipal governments and other agencies and organizations within Taos County to improve public land management on a landscape scale; and

**WHEREAS**, these public lands provide critical habitat for native fish and wildlife populations including bighorn sheep, elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, pine marten, marmot, pika, and Rio Grande cutthroat trout; and

**WHEREAS**, these public lands within Taos County have traditionally been a legally-recognized source of fish, game, firewood, pinon and medicinal herbs for traditional Hispano and Native American communities and families; and

**WHEREAS**, many of the watersheds and acequias originate on these public lands, providing local communities with clean water supplies; and

**WHEREAS**, Americans from across the United States value national public lands, as part of our national heritage, and desire to have them protected for future generations to benefit from and enjoy; and

**WHEREAS**, Taos County residents participate extensively in volunteerism, helping to maintain trails, build bridges, clean up debris, provide education to visitors and much more, because of their respect and appreciation of the value of these lands for all Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, there are approximately 3,989 abandoned mines on public land in New Mexico, and it is estimated that New Mexico taxpayers could face between \$385 million and \$842 million in cleanup costs, should the state assume liability for the abandoned mines located on BLM and USFS lands; and



**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Forest Service spent over \$240 million in FY2011 and FY2012 to fight wildfires on public lands in New Mexico, a cost that New Mexico taxpayers would have to pay for, should federal public lands be transferred to the state; and

**WHEREAS**, federal funds, labor, personnel, equipment and other specialized fire-prevention and fire-suppression assets are essential to protecting our communities from wildfire; and

**WHEREAS**, these lands are an outstanding value to surrounding villages, tribal groups, acequia organizations, land grant communities and nothing in this resolution diminishes their rights.

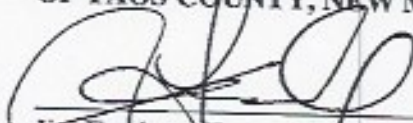
**NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the Taos County Board of Commissioners support continued national ownership and management of these invaluable public lands in Taos County, as well as in the United States generally, as national assets for all Americans.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board recognizes the irreplaceable value these lands provide to our economy, recreation, quality of life and national heritage.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED**, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of December 2016.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF TAOS COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**



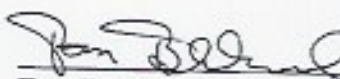
  
Jim Fambro, Chairman

**ABSENT**

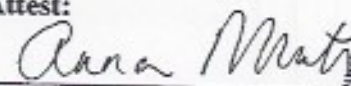
Mark Gallegos, Vice-Chair

**VOTE RECORD:**

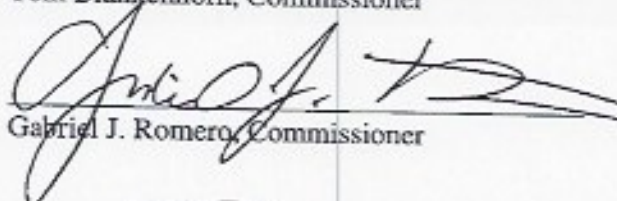
|                |                                      |                                     |                               |   |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| J. Fambro      | <input checked="" type="radio"/> yes | <input type="radio"/> no            | <input type="radio"/> abstain | <input type="radio"/> absent            |
| M. Gallegos    | <input checked="" type="radio"/> yes | <input type="radio"/> no            | <input type="radio"/> abstain | <input checked="" type="radio"/> absent |
| T. Blankenhorn | <input checked="" type="radio"/> yes | <input type="radio"/> no            | <input type="radio"/> abstain | <input type="radio"/> absent            |
| G. J. Romero   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> yes | <input type="radio"/> no            | <input type="radio"/> abstain | <input type="radio"/> absent            |
| C. O'Donnell   | <input type="radio"/> yes            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> no | <input type="radio"/> abstain | <input type="radio"/> absent            |

  
Tom Blankenhorn, Commissioner

**Attest:**

  
Anna Martinez, Taos County Clerk

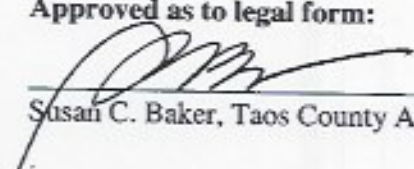


  
Gabriel J. Romero, Commissioner

**NO**

Candyce O'Donnell, Commissioner

**Approved as to legal form:**

  
Susan C. Baker, Taos County Attorney

TAOS COUNTY  
ANNA MARTINEZ, CLERK  
000417219  
Book 933 Page 14  
2 of 2  
12/20/2016 01:22:48 PM  
BY AMANDRA



**TAOS COUNTY  
RESOLUTION NO. 2016-55**

TAOS COUNTY  
ANNA MARTINEZ, CLERK  
000417344  
Book 933 Page 339  
1 of 2  
12/27/2016 04:01:33 PM  
BY AMANDAA

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TAOS COUNTY COMMISSION  
AFFIRMING SUPPORT OF THE RIO GRANDE DEL NORTE  
NATIONAL MONUMENT**

**WHEREAS**, the Rio Grande del Norte consists of spectacular public lands spanning 242,500 acres of extraordinary scenic, environmental, economic, cultural and recreational value in Taos County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Rio Grande del Norte supports a unique suite of flora and fauna, and is a rich wildlife habitat for elk, bighorn sheep, otter, fish, and birds of prey, and encompasses an important wildlife migration corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, this area of wild land offers a paradise for hiking, camping, river rafting, photography, mountain climbing, fishing, and supports traditional land uses including hunting, fishing and grazing, and is an outstanding place for observing nature in all its splendor, offering a much-needed refuge for human solitude and spiritual rejuvenation; and

**WHEREAS**, protecting the Rio Grande and its watershed as a National Monument helps sustain a key irrigation source for farmers and acequias and a key water supply for many towns and cities, and helps ensure that people and wildlife can use the river for years to come; and

**WHEREAS**, harm to these lands and waters would damage our region's economy and culture, with demoralizing consequences for generations to come; and

**WHEREAS**, significant tourism revenues flow from this area in a state where tourism is the economic spine and where in the first year after designation, there was a 40 percent increase in visitors to the National Monument, and Taos County has enjoyed significant increases in lodgers' tax revenue and gross receipts revenue from the accommodations and food service sector; and

**WHEREAS**, the tourism industry generated the largest economic impact in state history for the sixth straight year in 2016. This resulted in nearly \$6.3 billion being added to the New Mexico economy and supported 90,400 jobs; and

**WHEREAS**, the designation of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument through the Antiquities Act was a result of broad public support for better protecting public lands and involved a thorough and transparent public process that included years of collaboration between business owners, elected officials, Native American Tribes, Hispanic/Latino leaders, ranchers, veterans, outdoor recreation interests, the conservation community and many others; and

**WHEREAS**, permanent protection of the Rio Grande del Norte as a National Monument was a critical step in perpetuating the values of the people of northern New Mexico, who for centuries have demonstrated their deeply and widely held values of treasuring and protecting this great land; and



WHEREAS, according to a 2016 poll of registered voters in Taos County, 95% said that public lands were important to them and that it was important to preserve for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument was warranted and a fitting way honor our people, our state and our grandchildren's future.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Taos County Board of County Commissioners strongly reaffirms support of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, to protect its scenic, environmental, economic, recreational and traditional values.

MAY IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the Taos County Board of County Commissioners strongly opposes any efforts to rescind, minimize or otherwise harm the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED, this 6<sup>th</sup> day of December 2016.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF TAOS COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

TAOS COUNTY  
ANNA MARTINEZ, CLERK  
000417344  
Book 933 Page 340  
2 of 2  
12/27/2016 04:01:33 PM  
BY AMANDA

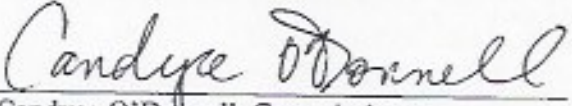
  
Jim Fambro, Chairman

  
Mark Gallegos, Vice-Chair

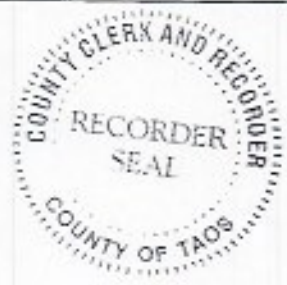
  
Tom Blankenhorn, Commissioner

**ABSENT**

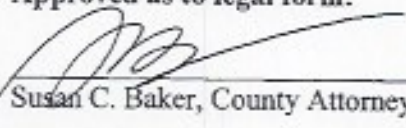
Gabriel J. Romero, Commissioner

  
Candyce O'Donnell, Commissioner

| VOTE RECORD:   |                                      |    |         |   |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----|---------|---|
| J. Fambro      | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES | no | abstain | absent                                  |
| M. Gallegos    | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES | no | abstain | absent                                  |
| T. Blankenhorn | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES | no | abstain | absent                                  |
| G. J. Romero   | <input type="radio"/> YES            | no | abstain | <input checked="" type="radio"/> absent |
| C. O'Donnell   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES | no | abstain | absent                                  |



Attest:  
  
Anna Martinez, County Clerk  


Approved as to legal form:  
  
Susan C. Baker, County Attorney