

VILLAGE OF QUESTA

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Mark Gallegos, Mayor

Lawrence A. Ortega, **Councilor**
Brent P. Jaramillo, **Councilor**
Julian Cisneros, **Councilor**
John Anthony Ortega, **Councilor**
Michael G. Rael, **Municipal Judge**

May 24, 2017

Secretary Ryan Zinke
Monument Review, MS-1530
US Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240
Re: DOI-2017-0002 Monument Review

Dear Secretary Zinke,

As the Mayor of the Village of Questa, New Mexico, I am writing to express my concern over the recent Executive Order to review recently designated Monuments and to voice my support for the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

The Village of Questa is surrounded by Public Lands, and is adjacent to the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. Our local economy benefits from tourism and outdoor recreation. People visit Questa to enjoy the beauty of the natural surroundings, and to hunt and fish on Public Lands, including the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

The Village of Questa directly benefits from public lands conservation in New Mexico, specifically from the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. When people come to Questa to hunt and fish, and to recreate out on the Monument, it creates jobs for our local guides and outfitters, and generates revenue for our town and our local businesses.

Mr. Secretary, the Village of Questa were/are supporters of National Monument Designation for Rio Grande del Norte, and were active participants in the National Monument process, going back to the efforts to establish the area as a National Conservation Area, beginning in 2008. As Mayor, I have spoken at public meetings, and have signed letters of support for Rio Grande del Norte.

Former Questa Mayors Malaquias Rael and Esther Garcia were supporters of both the NCA and National Monument, and Mayor Esther Garcia Testified before Congress in March of 2012, on behalf of the Rio Grande del Norte. Mayor Garcia was even present in the Oval Office, for the Rio Grande del Norte Proclamation, in March of 2013.

As a direct result of the involvement and participation from the Village of Questa, specific verbiage was added to the National Monument Proclamation that acknowledges and ensures cultural and historic uses like cattle grazing, firewood collection, and piñon nut gathering.

Secretary Zinke, please be assured that the Questa community was involved with and participated in the process to establish the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. The Village of Questa strongly supports this National Monument designation, and I am asking you to recommend that the Rio Grande del Norte not be modified in any way.

Thank you very much,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Gallegos". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Mark Gallegos, Mayor
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