

Daniel R. Barrone, Mayor

Councilmembers:

Judith Y. Cantu

Nathaniel Evans

Darien Fernandez

George "Fritz" Hahn



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www.taosgov.com

Rick Bellis, Town Manager

From the office of:

Daniel R. Barrone

Mayor

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

May 24, 2017

Dear Secretary Zinke,

As the Mayor of the Town of Taos, 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 Town of Taos 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 Taos to hike and bike, raft and balloon, and hunt and fish on our public lands, including the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

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

The Town of Taos is a strong supporter 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. On October 23, 2012, the Town of Taos passed a Resolution in support of National Monument Designation for Rio Grande del Norte. As Mayor, I have spoken at numerous public meetings, and have signed letters of support for Rio Grande del Norte.

Specific verbiage was included in the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument Proclamation that acknowledges and ensures cultural and historic uses that are important to our community, like hunting, fishing, cattle grazing, firewood collection, and piñon nut gathering.

"La Ciudad de Don Fernando de Taos"
Incorporated May 7, 1934

Secretary Zinke, the Town of Taos was involved with, and participated in the process to establish the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. The Town of Taos 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,


Mayor Dan Barrone



RESOLUTION 17-28

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE RIO GRANDE DEL NORTE NATIONAL MONUMENT.

WHEREAS, the Taos Town Council passed Resolution 12-67 endorsing the permanent protection of the Rio Grande del Norte proposal through the enactment of legislation as a national conservation area or a presidential proclamation as a national monument; and

WHEREAS, the Council found that the extraordinary scenic, environmental, cultural, and recreational value of the 242,500 acres of public lands warranted permanent protection; and

WHEREAS, the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument serves as an essential wildlife corridor and critical habitat to a wide variety of animals and birds including big horn sheep, elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, otter, cougar, bear, eagles, and various aquatic species, including the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout, New Mexico's State Fish.

WHEREAS, significant support for the protection of these lands vital to the environmental and economic interests of northern New Mexico was expressed by a diverse community coalition of ranchers, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, preservationists, and traditional land users; and

WHEREAS, the Rio Grande del Norte was designated a National Monument on March 23, 2013 by President Barack Obama, after a successful 25 year effort to build a broad coalition of support, yet derailed legislatively by a dysfunctional congress; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument has definitively improved the lives of residents and visitors to Northern New Mexico by making accessible to all, public lands that offer a paradise for hiking, camping, river rafting, photography, mountain climbing, fishing, and supports traditional land uses including hunting, wood gathering and grazing, and is an outstanding place for observing nature in all of its splendor, and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument has led to an increase in visitors to Northern New Mexico, which has in turn encouraged entrepreneurs to start businesses and increase job opportunities in this area; 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 special generations; and

WHEREAS, these community members are ethnically, economically, and politically diverse yet all agree on the need to protect public lands, and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument reflects the values of our community and respects traditional land uses, current land uses, and is a fitting gift to leave to our future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Taos Town Council that we strongly reaffirm our support of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, to protect its scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational values.

MAY IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Taos Town Council views any efforts to rescind, minimize, or otherwise harm the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument an affront to the values, culture, and identity of a multiethnic, economically diverse community, and are strongly opposed.


PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 13th day of June, 2017, at the Regular Meeting of the Town Council by the following vote:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Mayor Pro Tem Nathaniel Evans | <u>yes</u> |
| Councilmember Darien Fernandez | <u>yes</u> |
| Councilmember George "Fritz" Hahn | <u>yes</u> |
| Councilmember Judith Cantu | <u>absent</u> |

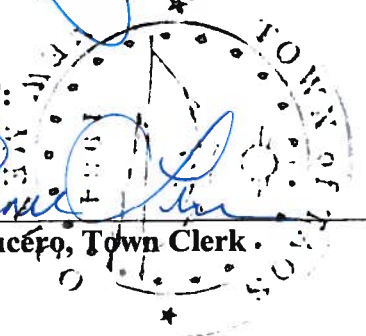
TOWN OF TAOS




Daniel R. Barrone, Mayor

ATTEST: 

Renee Lucero, Town Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM



Stephen C. Ross, Town Attorney



RESOLUTION 12-67

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF TAOS COUNCIL ENDORSING THE PERMANENT PROTECTION OF THE RIO GRANDE DEL NORTE PROPOSAL THROUGH THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION AS A NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA OR A PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION AS A NATIONAL MONUMENT

WHEREAS, the Rio Grande del Norte consists of spectacular public lands spanning 235,980 acres of extraordinary scenic, environmental, economic, cultural and recreational value in Taos and Rio Arriba counties; 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, gathering and grazing, and is an outstanding place for observing nature in all of its splendor, offering a much needed refuge for human solitude and spiritual rejuvenation; and

WHEREAS, protecting a substantial portion of the Rio Grande and its watershed will help sustain a key irrigation source for farmers and acequias and a key water supply for many towns and cities, and will help 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 there is significant potential for increasing these revenues through permanent protection of the Rio Grande del Norte; and

WHEREAS, permanent protection of the Rio Grande del Norte is 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, in New Mexico's centennial anniversary year, permanent protection of the Rio Grande del Norte, through legislation passed by Congress or as a National Monument designated by the President, is warranted and would be a fitting way to honor our people, our state and our grandchildren's future.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Taos that we strongly support protection of the Rio Grande del Norte through a legislated National Conservation or a presidentially proclaimed National Monument, in order to protect its scenic, environmental, economic and recreational values.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED, this 23rd day of October, 2012 at the Regular Meeting of the Town Council by the following vote:

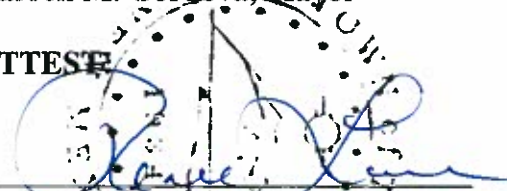
| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Mayor Pro Tem Andrew T. Gonzales | <u>yes</u> |
| Councilmember Rudy C. Abeyta | <u>yes</u> |
| Councilmember Michael A. Silva | <u>yes</u> |
| Councilmember Frederick A. Peralta | <u>yes</u> |

TOWN OF TAOS



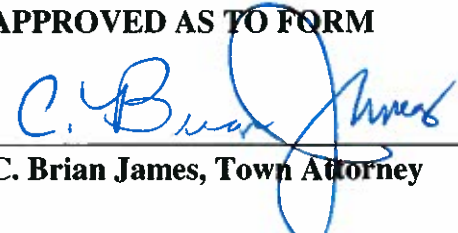
Darren M. Cordova, Mayor

ATTEST



Renee Lucero, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM



C. Brian James, Town Attorney