



October 22, 2013

Dear President Obama,

As spiritual leaders of our congregations in our communities, we represent people of faith across southern New Mexico. We are writing you today to ask you to designate the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks as a National Monument.

We do not approach this subject on the ground of policy or politics. Rather, our approach covers higher ground - the ground of what is right and what is just for our land and our people. For many of us, the biblical reference to "the land" signifies the inheritance, and the responsibility, we hold as people of faith to one another and to God.

The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks of Southern New Mexico has been the gateway to the north from Mexico along the Camino Real for hundreds of years. Its majestic, craggy peaks were a signal to travelers and settlers alike that they had entered another land. In addition, the public lands in Doña Ana County contain many sacred sites for Native American's. The Organ, Potrillos, Robledos, and Uvas Mountains are key fixtures of our entire region and national treasures that must be preserved.

We recognize that we are all responsible for taking care of God's natural gifts and we all have a role to play in serving as stewards of the land. That's why we feel it is important to clearly state our support for permanent protection of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Region.

The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks are a gift from God and should be protected for future generations to enjoy and we need your bold action to make it happen.

And, as pastors and clergy of congregations that are persevering during these difficult economic times, we recognize the job-creations benefits that a national monument will present for our people. We strongly believe that in addition to protecting God's natural gifts, a national monument in Doña Ana County will create economic activity through tourism, amenity migration and service-industry growth that will lift up our community during these difficult times.

We hope you will act to create the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument and know that people of faith across New Mexico would welcome and applaud this bold action from our President.

Respectfully,

Pastor Juan Acevedo, Centro Familiar Cristiano Assemblies of God, Anthony, New Mexico  
Rev. Andres Alava, St. Anthony Catholic Church, Anthony, New Mexico  
Rev. Vincent Petersen OFM, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, Tortugas, New Mexico  
Deacon Lou Roman, Chancellor Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rabbi Larry Karol, Temple Beth-El, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Brian Guerrini SSCC, Our Lady of Grace, Artesia, New Mexico  
Rev. Gorton Smith, First United Methodist, Roswell, New Mexico  
Rev. Wayne Hawkins, Iglesia del Pueblo Presbyterian, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Nancy Anderson, Pastor Emeritus Unitarian Universalist, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Linda Mervine, First Christian Church Disciples of Christ/UCC, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Eleazar Perez, San Martin de Porres Catholic Church, Sunland Park, New Mexico  
Harvey Daiho Hilbert, Roshi Zen Buddhist  
Rev. Gabriel Rochelle, St. Anthony of the Desert Orthodox, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Bishop Ricardo Ramirez OSB, Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Jim Lehman, Holy Family Ecumenical Catholic, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Carol L. Tuck, United Methodist Church, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Ron Booker, Lutheran, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Dalen Fuller Rogers, Unitarian Universalist Church, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Father Manuel Ibarra, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Hobbs, New Mexico  
Father Tom Smith OFM, Holy Cross Retreat Center, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Sister Michele Theres Gothro, Holy Family Ecumenical Catholic, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Rev. Suzanne Redford-Campbell, Unitarian Universalist, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Sister Maria Isabel Galbe, Sisters of the Assumption, Chaparral, New Mexico  
Sister Maria Theresa Nguyen, Sisters of the Assumption, Chaparral, New Mexico  
Sister Evelyn Strahl, Sisters of the Assumption, Chaparral, New Mexico  
Sister Diana Wauters, Sisters of the Assumption, Chaparral, New Mexico  
Beatriz Ferrera, Baha'i, Las Cruces, New Mexico  
Deacon Jesus Herrera, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Immaculate Conception Parish, St. Catherines, Pecos Valley, New Mexico  
Rev. Paul R. Miller, Honorably Retired Presbyterian Minister, Sierra Blanca Presbytery  
Rev. Alejandro Reyes, Parochial Vicar, Holy Cross, Doña Ana County