

## **Local Leaders Condemn Governor's Position on Monuments**

*Communities with New National Monuments Feel Betrayed by Governor's Action*

### **For Immediate Release**

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Mayors and County Commissioners near New Mexico's two National Monuments under review by President Trump are expressing outrage at Governor Martinez' recent letter supporting the potential reduction of New Mexico's newest National Monuments. In 2013 and 2014, President Obama established the Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monuments in Taos and Doña Ana Counties, following years of community efforts to achieve protection. Both new National Monuments have achieved significant increases in visitation and tourism. In the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, visitation increased by over 40% in its first year and the Town of Taos experienced a 21% increase in lodger's taxes and an 8.3% increase in gross receipts for lodging and restaurants. In Doña Ana County, the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks experienced a 102% increase in visitation in the last year alone.

Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima: "Governor Martinez's recent letter on the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument was a disappointing betrayal of our community and protected lands. This Monument contains amazing American and pre-American history, and is the birthright of future generations. I urge President Trump and Secretary Zinke to listen to our local communities who have overwhelmingly expressed their desire to see the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument stay protected."

Doña Ana County Commissioner Billy Garrett: "Governor Martinez fundamentally failed to appreciate the nationally significant historic, cultural, and scientific public lands in Doña Ana County. America and New Mexico were made better by their protection, and the Governor has done all New Mexicans a disservice by undermining this rich legacy."

Vice-Chair of the Doña Ana County Commission, John Vasquez: "The Doña Ana County Commission is one of four local governments who have recently passed resolutions opposing any changes to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. As a County Commissioner and Veteran, I am disappointed that Gov. Martinez has chosen to ignore our people who clearly want to protect our National Monument."

Taos County Commissioner and Mayor of Questa Mark Gallegos:

“I am saddened and frankly shocked to see the Governor of this state, the Land of Enchantment, support an unprecedented attack on our National Monuments. Just last week our state was celebrating one million additional visitors to New Mexico. In Taos County, and all of New Mexico, tourism is one of the bright spots in our otherwise weak economy.. It defies explanation that any Governor would sell out this priceless resource.”

Taos Mayor Dan Barrone: “There is no bigger attack on our citizen’s way of life and economy than to weaken the protection of our National Monuments and public lands. These are areas that are sacred to our native cultures and where we hike, camp, hunt, and bring in the tourism vital to our small businesses and economy. And, contrary to the Governor’s inaccurate statements, ranching also continues in the National Monument without restriction.”

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