

January 4, 2018

Rio Grande del Norte Wilderness Passes Unanimously!

Dear Friend,

I'm proud that my bill to protect wilderness within the Río Grande del Norte National Monument in northern New Mexico passed the Senate at the end of last year with unanimous support. This legislation will further complete the vision of the diverse coalition and stakeholders who fought so hard to protect the Río Grande del Norte National Monument.

From the tops of Cerro de la Olla and Ute Mountain, to the depths of the Rio Grande Gorge, the Río Grande del Norte is one of the most spectacular places on earth. My legislation establishes two new wilderness areas, the Cerro del Yuta Wilderness and Rio San Antonio Wilderness, within the monument. By designating the most rugged and unique habitat in the Río Grande del Norte as wilderness, we can protect the monument's natural heritage for our children and for generations to come.

It goes without saying that this strong bipartisan vote of support for Río Grande del Norte comes at the same time when the Trump Administration is leveling unprecedented attacks on our national monuments and public lands. President Trump's move to drastically shrink Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in southern Utah--alongside his looming threats to other national monuments like Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Río Grande del Norte in New Mexico--is a direct assault on our nation's conservation legacy.

New Mexico's community-driven Río Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monuments permanently protected iconic landscapes that have long been revered. They preserved traditional practices and boosted New Mexico's growing outdoor recreation economy. We shouldn't even need to argue about the importance of protecting public lands like these that we all treasure as integral parts of who we are as Americans.

We have a moral responsibility as a nation to our children and their children to protect and conserve our natural and cultural heritage. I won't stop fighting for our public lands and the outdoor traditions we all enjoy.

MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator