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January 13, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
U.S. House of Representatives
113 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative and Interior Secretary Nominee Zinke:

The undersigned representatives of the New Mexico sporting community write to you to express support for our national monuments and to encourage you to continue to protect public lands as you have throughout your career. Here in New Mexico, sportsmen and women and all who love the outdoors rallied in support for decades prior to the actual designation of Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains Desert Peaks national monuments. We now use them to this day to hunt, fish, and recreate in and know with pride that these lands will be used in the same way by our children's children.

Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains Desert Peaks both have historic, widespread support from local communities and are premier places to hunt and fish. According to the Bureau of Land Management, overall visitation to Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks grew by 102 percent between 2015 and 2016. Overall, the tourism industry had the largest economic impact in New Mexico's history for the sixth straight year in 2016 - this generated an additional \$6.3 billion for our economy and supported 90,400 jobs. These monuments had widespread support from sportsmen and businesses, a [full report is available here](#).

For sportsmen and women, these national monuments are priceless. In the north, Rio Grande del Norte provides critical habitat for elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and bighorn sheep. There are 66 miles of the state's finest wild trout water within the monument's boundaries.

In Organ Mountains Desert Peaks, quail, mule deer, javelina, and doves all thrive and give people from all over the state - and beyond - the opportunity to hunt in this unique setting. As a sportsman yourself, we're sure you understand the value of having these lands available to all Americans to hunt and fish.

By designating these national monuments under the Antiquities Act, local communities are able to utilize the land as they have for generations. Whether hunting, fishing, collecting firewood, grazing, or piñon picking, monument designation has protected our shared cultural heritage.

As sportsmen and women, we encourage you to protect our public lands in New Mexico and throughout the country, fight for access and funding, and reject calls to sell off our national public lands and reverse or weaken national monument protections.

Signed,

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Executive Director
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Albuquerque, NM

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Taos, NM

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Co-Chairs
Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen
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Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
New Mexico

CC: U.S. Senator Tom Udall (NM)
U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (NM)
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK)
U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (WA)