

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 20, 2019

Ms. Joanna Prukop
Chair, New Mexico State Game Commission
PO BOX 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Chairwoman Prukop:

As members of the New Mexico Congressional delegation who care passionately about ensuring access to New Mexico's public lands and expanding the outdoor economy, we applaud the State Game Commission's recent decision to place a moratorium on the "Non-Navigable Water Rule" and encourage the Commission to continue efforts to reassert the rights of New Mexico citizens to access our public lands, rivers and streams.

Communities across New Mexico recognize that outdoor recreation supports health, contributes to quality of life and attracts and sustains employers and families. Our public lands and waters are where locals and visitors alike go to find the biggest elk, the best camping spot, the most challenging single track, or the greatest fishing hole. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, the recreation economy supports 99,000 direct jobs and \$2.8 billion in wages in New Mexico. Ensuring the public's access to our land and water ensures our communities thrive economically and socially.

Public ownership of flowing waters is enshrined in New Mexico's constitution for good reason. Section 2, Art. 16, of the New Mexico Constitution states, "The unappropriated water of every natural stream, perennial or torrential, within the state of New Mexico, is hereby declared to belong to the public and to be subject to appropriation for beneficial use." The New Mexico Supreme Court affirmed public stream access in 1945 and multiple Attorneys General have reiterated public ownership of New Mexico's waterways.

Like others who value our federal lands and waters as assets to be enjoyed and passed to future generations, we respectfully urge you to reaffirm the state's commitment to uphold our access opportunities and stand against the privatization of New Mexico's streams and rivers.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Deb Haaland
United States Representative