

Dear Congressman Pierce,

I am writing about my concern regarding the "Wilderness" areas being promoted by the groups that are demanding that thousands of acres be classified as Wilderness in Dona Ana County.

These people are also saying that the ranchers who are now on the lands are not properly maintaining the ranges under consideration.

In my work as an Extension Agent in the Cooperative Extension Service of NMSU, I had the opportunity to work with and observe the work of the ranch families throughout much of New Mexico. In my opinion, if we didn't have the so called "small rancher" our range lands would be in dire shape. When the ranchers entire livelihood depends on the land, They do everything possible to conserve the soil, conserve the grass, and conserve all the range habitat.

However, my main concern is the establishment of a Wilderness Area along the Mexican border. In the rules of the "Wilderness Act", there can be no motorized vehicles allowed. It seems to me that would be wholesale opening for Illegal emigrants and terrorists to invade our country and nothing could be done about it.

Therefore, I ask that you do what you can to prevent these radical groups from pushing through such wilderness areas in Dona Ana County and other areas that might threaten our safety from the possibility of terrorist slipping into our country.

John J. Chappell