

November 21, 2007

Pete Domenici
U.S. Senator, State of NM
New Mexico – District 2
400 Telshor Ste E
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Jeff Bingaman
U.S. Senator, State of NM
Loretto Town Centre
505 S. Main, St. 148
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Stevan Pearce
Member of Congress
New Mexico – District 2
400 Telshor, St. E
Las Cruces, NM 88001

RE: Dona Ana Wilderness; Livestock and wildlife

Gentlemen:

I am a Mesilla Valley resident and I am going to weigh into this wilderness debate. My family has farmed in this valley for many, many years and I think that you need a perspective of common sense.

If you think that wilderness is going to be the cat's meow for wildlife you are badly mistaken. When this bunch in here talks about how great wilderness is for wildlife go take a ride in the Gila. There have been elk, but if you think it is a paradise for deer you are only 60 years too late. With the federal wolf program in process, the elk will be a thing of memory as well. In our desert environment, the wilderness effects will be worse. We think there is only one naturally occurring permanent water source west of the valley to the county line. Every other water is there because there are cattle there. Think about that. Every other water source is there because a rancher has either installed it directly or sought the right to do it through the state or the BLM. One hundred percent of the ongoing maintenance on those water sources is assumed by the ranchers. As I have learned about the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and their founding members and alliance organizations, I know full well their historical stance on cattle on federal lands and I am worried. These people have preached the removal of all cattle and this cat doesn't change its spots.

Our little deer herd out in these proposed areas doesn't cavort gleefully around the dry waterless stretches of the Potrillos or elsewhere. They, too, rely on the scattered livestock watering troughs. If you don't believe that go look at the tracks. Wildlife and livestock alike rely on these water sources! I would challenge any one of you to go to the BLM and check their records of the last time they participated in any maintenance of water sources. They don't. On weekends, or most of every Friday as well, they are not even in the office. They won't . . . can't . . . work on any water source. They'd have to have safety training for all of it anyway and wouldn't climb a windmill tower. They'd have to contract with somebody else to do that. This is crazy and it is an exercise of influence and power over a populous that borders on criminal.

If any of you had any guts you'd stand up in your respective chambers and announce that you are going to sponsor a bill that will eventually move all these federal lands into the hands of the United States citizenry. It would be only then that we'd be on equal footing with the rest of the country in the benefits of holding private property and having the ability to fully exert the magic of stewardship. If you are skeptical of the results wouldn't you only have to go to Texas, or New York or Michigan to see that given the chance man doesn't ruin it all? How come we aren't judged as smart or as capable of that sort of thing?

I've said my peace. I've never written to an elected delegate and I guess I don't expect much out of it, but it's way too late to find paradise. Cattle have long been the salvation of what little wildlife we have and the big end of people have absolutely no understanding of that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miguel Lucero', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Miguel Lucero

Dona Ana County