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PEARCE SUBMITS INNOVATIVE LAND PROTECTION LEGISLATION --- Coalition of over 700 Businesses and Organizations Support Measure

Congressman Steve Pearce introduced the Doña Ana County Planned Growth, Open Space and Rangeland Preservation Act of 2008 (H.R. 6300) to the House of Representatives on June 18th.

More than 700 businesses, governmental entities, and community organizations have formed a Coalition endorsing this legislation that would preserve open space and protect rangeland in southern New Mexico without the designation of "federal wilderness." This Coalition includes well over 3 times the number of supporting businesses and organizations in comparison to the coalition supporting federal Wilderness designation for these areas.

Tom Cooper, Chairman of People for Preserving Our Western Heritage, stated "We are gratified that Congressman Steve Pearce has recognized our efforts of the past two years, by introducing this legislation. Congressman Pearce remains steadfast in his efforts to meet the desires and expectations of the citizens of the 2nd Congressional District and the State. We greatly appreciate his efforts, and we applaud him for his consistently strong stand to protect the property rights and the heritage of all Americans. Thank you, Congressman Pearce!"

In addition to the business support, the plan has also been endorsed by numerous professionals, including two past presidents of New Mexico State University. Presidents Emeritus Gerald Thomas and William Conroy have signed on as backers of the proposed legislation.

In addition, the PPWH has now been endorsed by the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, the Elephant Butte Irrigation District, the National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers, the Mesilla Valley Sportsmen's Alliance, the Village of Hatch, the Hatch Valley Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers of America, the La Union Soil and Water Conservation District, the N.M. Department of Agriculture, the N.M. Farm and Livestock Bureau, N.M. Cattle Growers, N.M. Wool Growers, Doña Ana County Commission Chairman Kent Evans, and Farm Credit of New Mexico.

The Board of Trustees of the Village of Hatch unanimously voted to rescind a previous resolution supporting the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance proposal.

The movement for an alternative plan began when pro-wilderness groups proposed locking up more than 300,000 acres in Doña Ana County. The board of PPWH contends such an action would destroy historic ranches, threaten border security and create problems with flood and fire control.

People For Preserving Our Western Heritage has been named "Organization of the Year" by the Coalition of New Mexico/Arizona Counties, and has received that organization's endorsement.

The complete legislation and associated map are available at the organization's web site, www.PeopleForWesternHeritage.com.