

I would like to submit testimony for the record for S 1689.

Our country has over 109 million acres of land that is already protected by federal Wilderness designation. I am not conceptually opposed to Wilderness designation. However, I do believe that all of the true wilderness areas in our country have already been protected through Wilderness designation, and I do not support federal Wilderness designation for the areas addressed in this legislation.

I do support protection for these areas to restrict these areas from development. However, federal Wilderness legislation is overly restrictive and would create many hardships for our community. Border security is of utmost concern, and the elimination of motorized vehicles and mechanized equipment effectively cripples border security and law enforcement efforts. Jim Switzer, National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers, states "The presence of any wilderness on the Mexican border is a danger to the security of the United States". This is a ridiculous and irresponsible risk to take for a community so near the Mexican border.

The restrictions on designated Wilderness areas also have numerous other impacts on other users of the lands. Flood control, water capture and other water management projects would be impossible, or made extremely difficult to implement. Ranchers will be severely impacted. Roads will be closed and the public will lose access. Proactive measures for brush control, invasive species elimination, and restoration of native grasslands will not be possible.

Our community has broad agreement on protection from development. That can very easily and effectively be addressed through other legislative measures.

Lastly, I would encourage you to consider why the NMWA organization is so opposed to any alternative designation to federal Wilderness to protect these areas. If their true interest was protecting the land in the most appropriate manner, they would be more than happy to support a designation other than Wilderness that protects the land while addressing the needs of our community. For some insight into this, I suggest you look into the backgrounds of some of the individuals involved in the Wilderness and environmental movement.

Dave Foreman, the founder of EarthFirst! was the founder of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. The 2007 Summer newsletter of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance stated that Dave Foreman "provided many, if not most, of the philosophical underpinnings that guide the work of NMWA." Mr. Foreman has hosted NMWA "Holiday" parties, and is still an influential leader, although after public awareness increased about his involvement with NMWA, he has been removed from the board of directors and replaced by Nancy Morton, his wife.

Mr. Foreman wrote an article posted on his "Around the Campfire" blog titled "Birth Dearth Folly and the 300 Millionth American" Issue 2 January 1, 2007. In that article, he stated: *"Terrible and foreboding as our country's population explosion to 300 million is, more terrible and foreboding is how Americans across our beautiful land are reacting. For almost forty years, I've supported slowing and then halting human population growth. It hasn't been my main issue, but I have always woven it in—especially in my Earth First! Journal and Wild Earth writings."*, and later in the article, *"Humans have already overshot ecological carrying capacity on Earth. The greenhouse effect leading to catastrophic climate change is only one example. Earth's carrying capacity at a European level of living is several billion fewer people than the current population."* He has also stated: *"We must make this an insecure and inhospitable place for capitalists and their projects. We must reclaim the roads and plowed land, halt dam construction, tear down existing dams, free shackled rivers and return to wilderness millions of acres of presently settled land."*

Mr. Foreman also co-founded the Wildlands Project, a group with the "vision" of establishing large core wilderness reserves (estimates of up to 50% of the continental US, termed "continental-scale conservation") with interconnecting corridors and buffers. He has been involved in numerous other Wilderness related projects, and the information is well documented and readily available for anyone willing to take the time to do even the most basic research.

I realize the Wilderness and environmental advocates are very well funded, and are backed by countless lawyers that can use existing laws like the Endangered Species Act as a hammer to further their agenda. I am hoping that this committee is unaware of the agenda behind the Wilderness movement and its advocates. Before passing any more Wilderness legislation, I would strongly encourage you to look into this.

Should you continue to pass Wilderness legislation, and other measures like it, you are putting our nation's homeland security at risk, you are putting our nation's agricultural industry and our food supply at risk, and you are putting each and every citizen of this country at risk. I am asking you to please consider carefully the ramifications of your decisions and actions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Terry Denning