



Senator Martin Heinrich & Ben Ray Lujan  
303 Hart Senate Office Building  
498 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

August 31, 2021

Dear Honorable Senators;

Today we stand united to voice our concerns with the Wild and Scenic River designation as it is currently written.


We recognize the importance of protecting the river. However, the legislation could have an adverse impact on ranchers, miners, and other property owners' ability to effectively utilize their land and resources near the river.


For example, as currently written, the legislation could significantly impact the Tyrone Mine's critical infrastructure above and between the proposed designated sections. Stating that the legislation is not intended to impact previous uses along the river offers no protection if the written legislation does not convey that. Maintenance, repairs, and other business activities don't always look identical to the original use. The mine itself is upstream and without the clarification, Tyrone Mine could be impacted by future legal interpretations, jeopardizing the jobs of over 340 employees and contractors. This impact would cause significant and lasting harm to our community and economy.


Tyrone and Chino Mines contributed \$182.3 million directly to Grant County in 2019, including \$30 million in spending by employees and \$4.5 million in the form of taxes. A study led by the NM Department of Education showed that mining wages in our area are an average of \$79,000 a year. Compare the to \$25,000 for leisure and hospitality related jobs. If new jobs were created in these sectors, they still would not be able to replace the livable wages offered by mining.

We want to protect our river, our community, and our economy. We also want to support our families, friends and neighbors who depend on the river for their livelihoods. This can be accomplished by modifying the proposed language of the legislation, leaving no room for doubt that agriculture, ranching, and mining are valued economic engines in Southwestern New Mexico. We shouldn't jeopardize one in favor of the other. We urge you to revise the wording in the legislation.

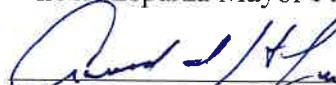
By signing this letter today, we are standing together to show our support for the future of our community.

  
Richard Bauch, Mayor

  
Trustee Olga Amador

  
Trustee Peter Erickson

  
Albert Esparza Mayor Pro-Tem

  
Trustee Arnold Lopez

Attest:   
Sheila Hudman Clerk/Treasurer

