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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW,
Washington, DC

Dear President Obama,

As a co-chair of National Landscape Conservation System Caucus, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in the recent designation of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. This designation protects significant cultural, historic, and scenic values and is well deserving of action through your authority under the Antiquities Act.

With this designation the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument becomes the newest unit of and will add nearly 500,000 acres to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) National Conservation Lands. Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks is a wonderful addition the legacy of treasured landscapes that you have added to the National Conservation Lands along with Fort Ord National Monument, San Juan Islands National Monument, Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and your expansion of California Coastal National Monument.

The National Conservation Lands are the newest system of protected lands in the country, comprising over 27 million acres of national monuments, national conservation areas, wilderness areas and other public lands and waters. Though the Conservation Lands represent just over 10 percent of BLM's total estate they receive approximately one-third of all visitors to BLM lands, contributing significantly to the local economies of surrounding communities.

In addition to protecting priceless cultural, historic and natural resources the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument will continue to bolster visitation and economic activity on our National Conservation Lands. Long used by local residents, this area contains critical habitat for key wildlife species, provides outstanding hunting opportunities, and supports thousands of jobs. According to an independent economic study, this national monument designation will have a significant positive impact on the local economy – contributing more than \$7.4 million in additional economic activity annually and doubling the number of jobs supported by the outdoor recreation and tourism industry in the region. This study is bolstered by recently released data from another recent addition to the National Conservation Lands in New Mexico, the Rio Grande

del Norte National Monument, where visitation has already increased 40% following last year's designation.

The designation of this national monument is in cooperation with over a decade of public discourse and the strong local support that exists for protecting this vital landscape. I thank you for using your discretion under the Antiquities Act to designate this national monument in accordance with local wishes and for doing so via a highly transparent and collaborative process which included public meetings and substantial local input.

Since 1906, the Antiquities Act has been an important bipartisan tool for protecting our nation's greatest cultural, historic, wild and scenic treasures and has been used by many previous Presidents to protect areas with significant value including the Grand Canyon, the Grand Tetons, and Denali. The strong local support for permanently protecting Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks was apparent during the substantial public input process. This support coupled with continued Congressional inaction further demonstrates the need for Presidential use of the Antiquities Act to permanently protect this very special landscape. There are some places which are of such critical local and national significance that their protection should not be delayed due to partisan gridlock in Congress. The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument is such a place. I thank you for your leadership in designating the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument in full cooperation with local stakeholder input.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva

Member of Congress

Co-Chair, National Landscape Conservation System Caucus