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Governor Bill Richardson Announces Support for Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness Act

SANTA FE -- Governor Bill Richardson announced his support today for the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness Act, which was introduced by New Mexico Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall.

“I applaud the leadership of Senator Bingaman and Senator Udall who introduced this important legislation to protect many of the most important public lands in Southern New Mexico,” said Governor Richardson. “From the jagged spires of the Organ Mountains to the petroglyphs in Broad Canyon, this bill will protect some of the finest ecosystems and vistas that New Mexico’s Chihuahuan Desert has to offer, while making an important contribution to our country’s wilderness and National Landscape Conservation System.”

The act (S. 1689) creates wilderness and conservation areas that would provide for continued public use while protecting 259,000 acres of wilderness and 100,000 acres of National Conservation Area (NCA). The bill also releases 16,350 acres along the southern border that had previously been designated as so-called "Wilderness Study Area". This will provide increased flexibility for border law enforcement.

A fact sheet from Senator Bingaman’s office is available at http://bingaman.senate.gov/policy/organmntns_factsheet.pdf.

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