

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3105

June 13th, 2022

Water Quality Control Commission
1190 Saint Francis Drive
Suite # South 2102
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Pamela.Jones@state.nm.us

Re: WQCC 21-62(R) – Outstanding Waters Designations for Rio Hondo, Lake Fork of the Rio Hondo, Upper Rio Grande, and Jemez River Headwaters (Rio San Antonio, East Fork Jemez River, and Redondo Creek)

Dear Water Quality Control Commissioners,

We write to you today in regards to the Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) petition put forth by the NM Outdoor Recreation Division (NM-ORD). To deliver on the promise of clean water for future generations, you have the authority to designate our most treasured waters as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRWs).

We support protecting the Rio Hondo, Lake Fork of the Rio Hondo, Upper Rio Grande, and Jemez River Headwaters (Rio San Antonio, East Fork Jemez River, and Redondo Creek) as Outstanding Waters (ONRWs). Protecting these waters will ensure that water quality is protected for generations to come.

Outstanding Waters designation for these ecologically and recreationally significant waters will support and protect existing community uses, such as ranching and farming, while prohibiting new pollution from impacting our watershed. For generations the local community has depended on clean water in the Rio Hondo, Upper Rio Grande, and Jemez watersheds to water livestock and feed acequias. This designation will ensure that clean water continues to flow downstream to these critical watershed stakeholders and protect these traditional uses from new development and impacts.

These waters are rich with ecological resources, and they also provide significant recreational opportunities for both New Mexicans and visitors alike. These rivers and watersheds represent some of the premier fishing, boating and recreating opportunities in our state that New Mexicans enjoy and depend upon. In addition, ONWR protections will help draw much needed attention for restoration and water and fuel management projects throughout these watersheds.

Upon hearing the testimony and the merits of the case for protection of the special watersheds, we hope you will vote to support this effort. We urge the Commission to designate these waters as ONRWs.

BEN RAY LUJÁN
NEW MEXICO

SUITE SD-840C
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3105
(202) 224-8621

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3105

Sincerely,



BEN RAY LUJÁN
United States Senator