

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
INTELLIGENCE  
JOINT ECONOMIC

June 13, 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:

I write to you today about the Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) petition put forth by the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division. Under the Clean Water Act, you have the authority to designate our most treasured waters as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRWs).

I 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.

Protection of 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, ONRW 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, I urge you to carefully consider the petition to designate these waters as Outstanding National Resource Waters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Heinrich', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senator