

Western Resource Advocates

Dear Water Quality Control Commissioners, I am writing today on behalf of Western Resource Advocates (WRA), in support of the petition to nominate the waters of 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 National Resource Waters. WRA fights climate change and its impacts to sustain the environment, economy, and people of the West. We respect the different needs of New Mexico's diverse communities and partner with them to develop a shared vision for progress—one that advances communities while protecting biodiversity. Our team of policy experts, scientists, economists, and attorneys has a 30-year history of working where decisions are made, sweating the details, creating evidence-based solutions, and holding decisionmakers accountable. This on-the-ground work advances clean energy, protects air, land, water, and wildlife—and sustains the lives and livelihoods of the West. The waters nominated in this petition comprise some of the most prized recreational opportunities in the state. From fishing in the Jemez headwaters, to rafting the Upper Rio Grande or hiking, camping, and birdwatching along the banks of the Rio Hondo and Lake Fork, these rivers provide treasured opportunities to their immediate community and residents across the state. The outdoor recreation industry is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in New Mexico, and the added protection of ONRW designation will ensure that these streams maintain their exceptional quality to support this growing industry and continue to support the state's economy. Designating the 125 miles of nominated streams ensures that these waters continue to provide recreational, ecological and cultural benefits for generations to come. Through this designation, existing traditional and cultural uses such as farming and ranching will be protected, providing clean water and restricting future damaging projects that might impact water quality. In a state as dry as New Mexico, rivers and riparian areas provide critical habitat and unparalleled richness in species and diversity, which humans and wildlife depend on. Today we join with our partners across many sectors – from conservation non-profits to local governments, acequias to businesses – and urge you to designate all 125.9 miles of 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 National Resource Waters. Sincerely, Anjali Bean Healthy Rivers Senior Policy Analyst Western Resource Advocates



PROTECTING THE WEST'S LAND, AIR, AND WATER

June 7, 2022

Water Quality Control Commission
1190 Saint Francis Drive
Suite # South 2102
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Submitted via email to: Pamela.jones@state.nm.us

Re: WQCC 21-62(R) – Outstanding National Resource 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 am writing today on behalf of Western Resource Advocates (WRA), in support of the petition to nominate the waters of 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 National Resource Waters.

WRA fights climate change and its impacts to sustain the environment, economy, and people of the West. We respect the different needs of New Mexico's diverse communities and partner with them to develop a shared vision for progress—one that advances communities while protecting biodiversity. Our team of policy experts, scientists, economists, and attorneys has a 30-year history of working where decisions are made, sweating the details, creating evidence-based solutions, and holding decisionmakers accountable. This on-the-ground work advances clean energy, protects air, land, water, and wildlife—and sustains the lives and livelihoods of the West.

The waters nominated in this petition comprise some of the most prized recreational opportunities in the state. From fishing in the Jemez headwaters, to rafting the Upper Rio Grande or hiking, camping, and birdwatching along the banks of the Rio Hondo and Lake Fork, these rivers provide treasured opportunities to their immediate community and residents across the state. The outdoor recreation industry is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in New Mexico, and the added protection of ONRW designation will ensure that these streams maintain their exceptional quality to support this growing industry and continue to support the state's economy.

Designating the 125 miles of nominated streams ensures that these waters continue to provide recreational, ecological and cultural benefits for generations to come. Through this designation, existing traditional and cultural uses such as farming and ranching will be protected, providing clean water and restricting future damaging projects that might impact water quality. In a state as dry as New Mexico, rivers and riparian areas provide critical habitat and unparalleled richness in species and diversity, which humans and wildlife depend on.

Today we join with our partners across many sectors – from conservation non-profits to local governments, acequias to businesses – and urge you to designate all 125.9 miles of the Rio Hondo, Lake

Arizona
1429 North First Street
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Colorado - Boulder
2260 Baseline Road
Suite 200
Boulder, CO 80302

Colorado - Denver
1536 Wynkoop Street
Suite 210
Denver, CO 80202

Nevada
550 W. Musser Street
Suite G
Carson City, NV 89703

New Mexico
343 East Alameda
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Utah
307 West 200 South
Suite 2000
Salt Lake City, UT 84101



Fork of the Rio Hondo, Upper Rio Grande, and Jemez River Headwaters (Rio San Antonio, East Fork Jemez River, and Redondo Creek) as Outstanding National Resource Waters.

Sincerely,

Anjali M Bean

Anjali Bean
Healthy Rivers Senior Policy Analyst
Western Resource Advocates