



New Mexico State Senate
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SENATOR LEO JARAMILLO

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April 9, 2024

Mr. Mark Sando
District Ranger, Coyote Ranger District
HC 78 Box 1
Coyote, NM 87012

RE: Encino Vista Landscape Restoration Project (EVLRP)

Mr. Sando,

I am hearing concerns from constituents about the Santa Fe National Forest's Encino Vista Landscape Restoration Project. I share many of these concerns, believe the project will have a significant impact to local communities, and urge you to listen closely to public input.

I had not heard about this project before local constituents contacted me, and am hearing the project hasn't been widely publicized. I do appreciate your efforts to attend a meeting in Cañones this week and would like to see more of this public engagement.

Like my family, *la gente* of Northern New Mexico have been here for generations and know these mountains well. Many of them feel they will not or are not being listened to. It is difficult for some people to speak up, as some may not have achieved high levels of education, and others primarily speak our local Spanish. Regardless, they need to be given a voice and be heard, whether they are tribal members, farmers, ranchers, traditional loggers, local professionals or other residents.

The Land Grants and *Acequias* also must be meaningfully involved in this project. These are legal subdivisions of the State of New Mexico. They need to be as much partners throughout this project as impacted tribes and pueblos, or the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. Understanding of the perspective, experience and needs of Land Grants, *Acequias* and local communities by anyone working on the project is critical for achieving success on this very large, remote project.

All possible precautions must be taken prior to, during and after any prescribed burning. The impact of drought must be considered. Alternatives to prescribed burning should be strongly favored, including smaller timber harvesting and opportunities for local generational loggers. Localized and reliable data should inform decisions and planning. Modeling-based decisions should be based on appropriate data and assumptions. Any negative impacts to watersheds must be coordinated with affected communities

downstream. Awareness of local agriculture and communities who rely on the impacted watersheds should inform planning, decisions, actions and monitoring.

In my view, there are clearly significant impacts to the human [and broader] environment that will be caused by this project. As you are aware, this is the criteria to proceed to further analysis through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Culture and Rural Historic Communities, including Land Grants and *Acequias*, are part of the "Environment" that is analyzed under NEPA and for good reason. Our rural communities and *la Gente* matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leo Jaramillo', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Leo Jaramillo
New Mexico State Senator, District 5