



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

March 18, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0002

Dear Secretary Salazar:

I am encouraged and supportive of many of the initiatives launched recently by you and the Obama Administration concerning land conservation and responsible energy development on federal lands in the western United States. The increased rigor and transparency of drilling reviews demonstrates a willingness to make needed improvements and learn from past actions in states like New Mexico.

In that regard, I would also like to express my strong support for actions the Department of Interior is reported to be taking toward establishing national monuments on significant natural landscapes in the west, including Otero Mesa in southern New Mexico.

The State of New Mexico welcomes this national monument review effort as it furthers our work over the last seven years to protect these special landscapes. This is especially true concerning our long-standing commitment to conserving the unique grasslands ecosystem of Otero Mesa. New Mexico's efforts include a detailed state consistency review of BLM land management planning for Otero Mesa, successful litigation to prevent oil and gas development from occurring on Otero Mesa, and my expressed support for a proposed Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) at Otero Mesa. Needless to say, I have been and remain committed to obtaining long-term protection for Otero Mesa.

The State of New Mexico welcomes your efforts to consider further federal protections for these treasured landscapes and looks forward to fully participating in any national monument review process. Please feel free to contact Jon Goldstein, Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department, at Jon.Goldstein@state.nm.us or 505-476-3221 to coordinate efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Richardson".

Bill Richardson
Governor of New Mexico

BR/fl