



Senator claims the bills will benefit N.M. economy

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., led in advancing two bills he introduced March 30, that will enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation, reauthorize a key conservation program, improve access to public lands, and protect wilderness within the Río Grande del Norte National Monument northwest of Taos.

The Sportsmen's Act of 2017 cleared the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources today with bipartisan support. Senator Heinrich introduced the bill with Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska.

The Sportsmen's Act includes the text of Senator Heinrich's Hunt Unrestricted on National Treasures Act to improve access to public lands where hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation are permitted.

Additional measures Heinrich championed for New Mexico in the bill include reauthorizing the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act and a provision giving small media groups and individuals easier access to film and photograph on public lands.

Heinrich advances outdoor recreation, conservation bills

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Hunters and anglers alone spend more than \$613 million per year in New Mexico, and outdoor recreation as a whole is directly responsible for 68,000 jobs in the state. The Sportsmen's Act is supported by New Mexico Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

"Hunting and fishing are an integral part of our American heritage, but without our public lands, that tradition will be lost. This bill will make sure our kids and grandkids will be catching trout and chasing antelope on our public lands for many years to come," Heinrich said.

The Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness Act, introduced by Heinrich and U.S. Senator Tom Udall, D-N.M., also passed the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources today. The bill establishes two new wilderness areas, the Cerro del Yuta Wilderness and Rio San Antonio Wilderness, within the Río Grande del Norte National Monument.

The Río Grande del Norte National Monument is widely supported by Taos county residents, who have seen major economic activity since designation in 2013. A year after the national monument was designated, it was reported that the town of Taos lodgers' tax revenue increased by 21 percent in the second half of 2013, compared with the same time period in 2012.

In addition, gross-receipts revenue to businesses in Taos County in the accommodations and food service sector rose 8.3 percent in the second half of 2013 compared with the same period in 2012, representing an increase of \$3.7 million.

"From the tops of Cerro de la Olla and Ute Mountain, to the depths of the Rio Grande Gorge, the Río Grande del Norte is one of the most spectacular places on earth," Heinrich said. He then shared a letter to the editor from Floyd Archuleta, a rancher from El Prado who supports the legislation.

Both the Sportsmen's Act and the Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness Act will now advance to the full Senate for consideration.