



State of New Mexico
Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

December 19, 2003

Dear President Bush:

Many residents of New Mexico enjoy clean air and drinking water and access to hunting and fishing on national forest lands that have been in community use for generations and generations.

Thus I hope that you will uphold the Roadless Area Conservation Rule adopted in January 2001. The roadless rule represents a balanced policy protecting 58.5 million acres of the nation's best wild forests from activities that could change the character of the land. It was finalized after years of scientific study, 600 public hearings, and a record 1.6 million comments in support of the rule.

Residents of New Mexico are concerned that your administration has announced plans to weaken this historic conservation measure. Instead, we would urge the Administration to focus its attention on existing infrastructure in the national forests, now about \$10 billion in arrears.

This is an opportunity for you and the Administration to take a positive action with regard for New Mexico villages and towns within and adjacent to the many national forests in New Mexico. I will stand with you in support of this important rule.

I urge you to uphold the rule as it was promulgated in 2001. It will assure that future generations of New Mexicans will have the opportunity to use and enjoy New Mexico's national forests as past generations have.

Sincerely,

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

Bill Richardson
Governor