

March 11, 2019

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
Office of the Governor
490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

RE: HB 266 The Forest and Watershed Restoration Act

Dear Governor Lujan Grisham:

We are writing to express our support for HB 266, the Forest and Watershed Restoration Act and to ask that you please sign the bill into law. We believe that HB 266 meets a critical need to accelerate the restoration of forests that are dangerously overgrown and that jeopardize the security of New Mexico's water supplies.

The scale of the problem of overgrown forests and damaged watersheds is bigger than any one organization, agency or the private sector can solve on their own. This legislation is needed to foster a new way of doing business that increases the pace of forest restoration before it's too late to protect our watersheds from the damage of catastrophic wildfire.

The bill was developed with bi-partisan leadership in the legislature. Diverse stakeholders provided input during interim sessions, as far back as 2014, and at hearings throughout the 2019 session. The bill received unanimous support of Democrats and Republicans in both the House and Senate.

Healthy forests and watersheds are integral to New Mexico agriculture, water security, wildlife, outdoor recreation, and way of life. If enacted, the bill will help turn around the trend of high-severity wildfires in New Mexico, and secure clean water and clean air for future generations. Once again, we respectfully request that you sign HB 266 into law. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Terry Sullivan, State Director, The Nature Conservancy
Brent Racher, President, New Mexico Forest Industry Association
David King, President, New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts
Terri Cole, President and CEO, Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce
Heather Balas, Director, New Mexico First
Tim Haamann, Board Chairman, Chama Peak Land Alliance
Katherine Yuhas, Water Resources Div. Manager, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
Alexander Evans, Executive Director, Forest Stewards Guild
Dan Roper, Public Lands Coordinator, Trout Unlimited
Kent Reid, Director, New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute
Dale R. Dekker, AIA, AICP, Founding Principal, Dekker/Perich/Sabatini
Laura Doth, Executive Director, South Central Mountain Resource Conservation & Development Council
Jerry Lovato, Chief Engineer, Albuquerque Metro Arroyo Flood Control Association

CC: John Bingaman, Chief of Staff
Teresa Casados, Chief Operating Officer
Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary, Department of Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources