

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 16, 2021

Water Quality Control Commission  
1190 Saint Francis Drive  
Suite # South 2102  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505  
[Public.Facilitation@state.nm.us](mailto:Public.Facilitation@state.nm.us)

Re: WQCC 20-18(R)

Dear Commissioners:

We write to you today as you consider the Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) designation for the Upper Pecos Watershed. To deliver on the promise of clean water for future generations, you have the authority to designate our most treasured waters as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRWs). Upon hearing the testimony and the merits of the case for protection of this special watershed, we hope you will vote to support this effort.

We stand together with the Village of Pecos, San Miguel County, the New Mexico Acequia Association, the Upper Pecos Watershed Association, and Molino de la Isla Organics LLC on this petition. The iconic Upper Pecos watershed is the lifeblood of the region's economy, ecosystem and way of life. There are 55 acequias and traditional users in the watershed and they all rely on clean water. For generations, they have served as stewards of the river and lived by the values of "*Agua es vida.*"

The Pecos Business Association (PBA) relies on clean water to attract visitors and support the local economy. Hunters and anglers spent a combined \$47 million in 2013 in San Miguel County. Fly fishing guides have named the Upper Pecos 6<sup>th</sup> among the "11 best places to fly fish in NM." Hunters enjoy hunting for mule deer, elk and other species.

The growing outdoor economy of the region also attracts hiking, backpacking and wildlife viewing. These days, the area is vital for our local families with children to get outside. In the midst of this pandemic, we value opportunities for our children to get away from screens and technology and instead perhaps catch a fish or hike in nature.

We support this this ONRW designation to protect traditional agriculture and a way of life for our children and grandchildren and ask you to please support this nomination.

Sincerely,

/s/ Martin Heinrich  
MARTIN HEINRICH  
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

/s/ Ben Ray Luján  
BEN RAY LUJÁN  
Ben Ray Luján  
United States Senator

/s/ Teresa Leger Fernandez  
TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ  
Teresa Leger Fernandez  
United States Representative