

**Statement of
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**House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands**

H.R. 490, Cibola National Forest Boundary Expansion

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.R. 490, a bill that would expand the boundaries of the Cibola National Forest in New Mexico by transferring to the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) administrative jurisdiction of the Manzano Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and designating it as wilderness. The Manzano WSA is currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Department of the Interior supports H.R. 490.

Background

The 896-acre Manzano WSA is adjacent to the existing Manzano Mountain Wilderness on the southern end of the Cibola National Forest. The landscape, located on the west face of the Manzano Mountains, includes pinon-juniper with extensive wildlife populations, such as mule deer, bear, coyotes, numerous raptors, and mountain lions.

The New Mexico offices of the BLM and the Forest Service periodically discuss opportunities to adjust boundaries to improve the management of Federal land in order to manage parcels more effectively and efficiently on the ground. Through these discussions, the Manzano WSA was identified as a parcel that could be managed more efficiently by the Forest Service than by the BLM. We look forward to continuing our work with the Forest Service to explore opportunities to provide for more efficient and effective management of BLM and Forest Service lands.

During the 111th Congress, the House Natural Resources Committee favorably reported legislation (H.R. 5388) after adopting an amendment in the nature of a substitute that addressed concerns raised by the Department of the Interior on the introduced bill. H.R. 490 is identical to H.R. 5388 as reported by the Committee.

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The bill (Section 1(c)) transfers administrative jurisdiction of the Manzano Wilderness Study Area from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Agriculture to be managed by the Forest Service as part of the Manzano Wilderness Area. This area is adjacent to Forest Service-managed National Forest System lands (the Cibola National Forest), but isolated from other BLM-managed lands. The BLM supports this transfer. The remaining provisions of H.R. 490 pertain exclusively to the U.S. Forest Service's management of these lands after the transfer of administrative jurisdiction. We defer to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on issues affecting management of National Forest System lands.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.R. 490. I am happy to answer any questions.