

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
7TH DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
Subcommittee on Water and Power
Subcommittee on Parks, Forests and
Public Lands – *Ranking Member*

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary and Secondary Education
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Training

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS,
Co-Chair



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0307

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The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of the Interior
18th and C Street NW
Washington D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I would like to commend your efforts to craft a wilderness agenda that can be enacted in the 112th Congress. At your request, the Arizona Bureau of Land Management recently reached out to a number of elected and tribal stakeholders regarding lands that enjoy broad support for wilderness designation. In Arizona's 7th Congressional District, which I proudly represent, Pima County submitted two letters of recommendation for areas that deserve to be protected in perpetuity under the Wilderness Act. I would like to emphasize the importance of Pima County's support, and convey my own strong recommendation that these areas are included in your report to Congress this fall.

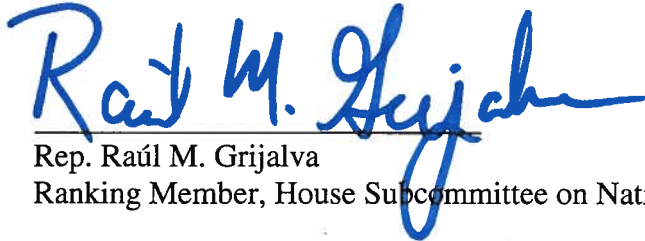
Several areas within the Ironwood Forest National Monument are well suited for wilderness designation. Such a designation for Ragged Top, the iconic feature of the Monument, has been locally supported dating back to 1987, when the Pima County Supervisors unanimously voted to support designation there. In August of this year, Pima County reaffirmed support for wilderness around Ragged Top and other areas including the Silverbell, West Silverbell, and Sawtooth Mountain units. Despite longstanding support and a high degree of wilderness suitability at these sites, the Monument still does not host a single unit within the National Wilderness Preservation System. I hope this will change, and I look forward to working in a cooperative manner with your department, local officials and other stakeholders in formally recognizing wilderness lands in Ironwood Forest National Monument.

I would also like to call your attention to the Batamote Mountains in my district, which lie north of the Town of Ajo. Pima County has supported wilderness designation for this spectacular Sonoran desert range, both in 1987 and in an August 2011 letter. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition submitted wilderness recommendations for this area in 2004, and the area is included in the BLM's preferred alternative for wilderness characteristics in the Draft Resource Management Plan for the Lower Sonoran Field Office. With outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primeval character rare for our region, these mountains would make a fine addition to the wilderness system.

The community of southern Arizona has continually supported a strong emphasis on conservation management of our public lands. Wilderness is an important component of this management approach, protecting core areas in ways that benefit humans and wildlife in myriad ways. Arizona is blessed with a rich legacy of bipartisan support for wilderness, and I am hopeful that your pending report will further contribute to our shared efforts to conserve the crown jewels of our state.

Thank you for considering these important areas as you prepare your report for Congress. I look forward to working with the administration, local stakeholders, and other interests in protecting these lands across southern Arizona.

With respect and very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva

Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands