

Information for Meeting with Melanie Stansbury

District 3 Representative - NM

From Susan Ostlie, Co-Leader - Rio Grande Valley Broadband of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness; Contact info: susanostlie@yahoo.com and cell - 505-228-5666

In Person Meeting: Thursday, 8/19/2021 5-6 PM

Purpose of this flyer:

- To ask Representative Stansbury to cosponsor America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. (ARRWA)
- To update her office about how ARRWA can help mitigate the climate and extinction crises and move us closer to the goal of protecting 30% of U.S. lands by 2030.
- To ask Representative Stansbury to encourage the Department of Interior to re-assert BLM's authority to identify and provide administrative protection to wilderness quality lands under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

Some notes and background info:

- ARRWA would protect about 8.5 million acres of truly spectacular wilderness-quality Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in Utah – mostly in the red rock canyon country of southeastern Utah, but also in the basin and range country of Utah's "west desert."
- The bill is supported by the Utah Wilderness Coalition, which includes the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, as well as more than 120 other national and regional conservation organizations and businesses (5 of which are in NM).
- ARRWA has been introduced in every Congress since 1989. Senator Dick Durbin is the Senate champion of the bill. Rep. Alan Lowenthal of California is the current House champion. (As of June 2021).

- There have been as many as 25 Senate and 140 House cosponsors in past sessions of Congress. In the last Congress, there were 21 Senators and 92 Representatives.

A major reason why it is so important for Representative Stansbury to cosponsor ARROWA

- Utah's public wild lands are doomed *unless members of Congress from outside Utah step up in support*. The Utah delegation has a long history of *attacking* public lands. It was at their urging that President Trump reduced Bears Ears National Monument by 85%, and the 21-year-old Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by 50%.
- Cosponsoring ARROWA makes a difference! A robust number of cosponsors for ARROWA is essential to creating the political pressure necessary to compel the Utah delegation to come to the table and consider conservation concerns.
- - An example of how robust support for ARROWA makes a huge difference is the 2019 Emery County Public Land Management Act (part of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act). In the end, this Act protected over 660,000 acres of wilderness in the San Rafael Swell and Labyrinth Canyon areas! The initial bill, however -- drafted by Emery County and introduced by the Utah delegation -- was terrible. The turning point came when Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), the champion of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, stepped in and was able to successfully negotiate significant improvements to the Emery County bill with Senator Hatch's office. *The fact that 25 Senators had cosponsored America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (signaling their support for meaningful protection of Utah's red rock canyon country) was a crucial factor in the success of Senator Durbin's effort.*
- Sometimes members of Congress worry about supporting a bill that is perceived as trying to steamroll over another state's

congressional delegation. It is useful to know that conservationists generally don't expect to move ARROWA as one giant bill that rolls over the Utah delegation (although there is an argument for this under the 30x30 campaign). Rather, ARROWA serves as:

- - a way to compel the Utah delegation to come to the table and consider conservation concerns.
- - a vision or benchmark against which smaller bills introduced by the UT delegation (which historically have always been terrible) can be measured and hopefully improved.
- - a tool to organize congressional support for acting in defense of this extraordinary piece of our national natural heritage.

ARROWA and Climate and 30x30

New research shows that ARROWA makes a significant contribution to mitigating the climate and extinction crises and to moving us closer to protecting 30% of US lands by 2030.

- (See this brochure: [The role of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act in protecting biodiversity and mitigation the climate crisis](#))

Section 202 WSAs

- Twenty-nine million acres of wilderness quality BLM lands in the West could come under administrative protection if the DOI re-asserts the BLM's authority to designate Wilderness Study Areas under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. This includes 345,072 BLM acres in New Mexico. This relatively low figure for NM may be because BLM's current inventories of wilderness quality lands in NM are not up-to-date rather than the absence of eligible lands.
- [See fact sheet](#)
- **Thank you for your time and service.**
- **Susan Ostlie RGVBB of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness**