



New Mexico State Senate

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SENATOR PETER WIRTH

D-Santa Fe-25

708 Paseo de Peralta
Santa Fe, NM 87501-1923

Business: (505) 988-1668 Ext. 104
Home: (505) 989-8667
peter.wirth@nmlegis.gov

May 28, 2010

Ms. Helen Hankins
State Director
BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215-7093

Dear Ms. Hankins:

I write to express my support for Christo and Jeanne-Claude's proposed project, *Over The River*. This temporary work of art, featuring 5.9 miles of silvery, translucent fabric panels suspended in sections high above a 40-mile stretch of the Arkansas River, will be a truly historic event that will benefit southern Colorado and northern New Mexico in many ways.

As a State Senator, I serve New Mexico's 25th District which includes most of Santa Fe's arts and culture businesses and institutions. During my six years representing this section of Santa Fe, I have come to appreciate the economic development role that the arts play in our town, our state and the southwest region. It is in this light that I believe the project proposed by Christo and Jeanne-Claude is not only an extraordinary public art event, but a real economic driver much needed in these difficult fiscal times.

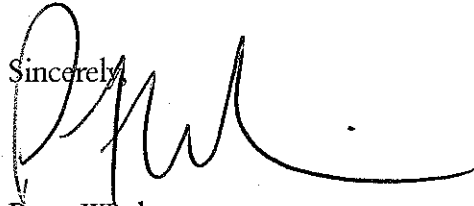
Key to my support is the fact that the artists have requested a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed as part of this project. This action is consistent with the artists' track record of taking every possible precaution to minimize and, when possible, entirely avoid any impact to the environment.

I am told that *Over The River* will be entirely funded by the artists. This includes not only the costs to construct and exhibit the project, but the cost of the EIS and the Bureau of Land Management staff managing this study. With an estimated cost of approximately \$50 million, this project represents a significant infusion of money into the regional economy. I am interested in the potential for additional art based tourist dollars coming from visits to Santa Fe and northern New Mexico done in conjunction with visits to see this exhibit.

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Please include this letter in any public comments you accept following the draft EIS.
If I can be of any assistance or provide any further input, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Wirth', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Wirth
State Senator District 25

PW:ps