

February 21, 2019

Senator Peter Wirth  
New Mexico Legislator  
708 Paseo de Peralta  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
[Peter.wirth@nmlegis.gov](mailto:Peter.wirth@nmlegis.gov)

RE: HB266 Forest and Watershed Restoration Act pending passage of HB206 Environmental Review Act

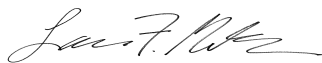
Dear Senator Wirth:

We are in receipt of the letter you shared with us from Mr. Sam Hitt, President of the Santa Fe Forest Coalition. Thank you for inviting us to comment in response. We appreciate Mr. Hitt's work to protect forests over many decades, and we share the goals of the Santa Fe Forest Coalition to educate the public on issues pertaining to forest and wildlife preservation on New Mexico's public and private lands.

The concerns Mr. Hitt raises, while valid, are addressed in several ways. As is correctly noted, if HB206 Environmental Review Act is passed, activities funded with the forest land protection revolving fund will be subject to environmental review and citizen involvement. If HB206 does not pass, there is still the backstop that any use of the funds on federal lands will be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires environmental review and provides a process for citizen involvement. HB266 purposes are ecological restoration, and any biomass use would be contingent on passage of a strengthened RPS that would make wood use for energy contingent on certification that it is zero carbon.

HB266 is a revised version of HB38 that passed in the 2015 session and was vetoed by Governor Martinez. The bill is supported by a broad coalition of organizations, ranging from Trout Unlimited and the Sierra Club to the Little Bear Forest Reform Coalition and Coalition of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. If Mr. Hitt would like to discuss this in further detail, we would be happy to sit down with him at any time.

Sincerely,



Laura McCarthy  
Associate State Director

CC: Representative Paul Bandy  
Sam Hitt