

BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF NEW MEXICO FEBRUARY, 2018 LANDS REPORT

State Legislature

*“No man’s life, liberty, or property are safe when the legislature is in session.”
Gideon John Tucker (February 10, 1826 – July 1899).*

I have reviewed bills introduced in the New Mexico Legislature for the 2018 session and find two worth discussing. One is good and the other very bad.

HM 53, introduced by Representatives Angelica Rubio and Stephanie Garcia Richards, requests the State Land Office to study the feasibility and economic impact of opening State Trust Lands to additional recreation and ecotourism activities. There is a long way to go between a study and a policy change, but certain public trust lands would provide good riding and camping options.

SB 134, introduced by Senator Cliff R. Pirtle, would establish a procedure whereby federal lands could be acquired by the state then sold to private interests. The bill starts with the proposition that all federal lands except national parks and monuments and designated wilderness areas shall be transferred from the federal government to the State of New Mexico. Of course, the State of New Mexico has no authority to effect such a transfer; only Congress could do so. The bill would, however, make a dangerous statement that New Mexico would be willing to accept such lands and to sell them to private companies and individuals once received.

Gila Water Diversion. The New Mexico Wildlife Federation recently delivered a petition and letter with more than 1,200 signatures from NM hunters and anglers to House Ag and Senate Conservation legislators, as well as the governor, asking them to oppose further efforts to divert the Gila River and to support the alternative water conservation projects on the table.

Here is the press release. <http://nmwildlife.org/news/1200-new-mexico-hunters-anglers-plead-legislature-no-gila-diversion/>

National Forest Plan Reviews

I am still looking for chapter members to help review proposed National Forest Plan revisions. Volunteers have stepped forward from the Santa Fe, Pecos and Gila Chapters. We need volunteers from the others.

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