



Office of the Mayor
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April 20, 2012

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

RE: Support for National Monument Designation for the Chimney Rock
Archaeological Area in Archuleta County, Colorado

Dear Mr. President:

As mayor of the Town of Pagosa Springs, I am writing to express our community's strong support for the national monument designation for the Chimney Rock Archaeological Area in Archuleta County, Colorado. Since 2009, our community has supported legislation to establish the Area as a national monument. We request you utilize your authority under the Antiquities Act to facilitate advancing this important initiative.

The Chimney Rock Archaeological Area is 4,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service lands that has great historical and cultural significance to the State of Colorado and the United States. Native Americans lived in these dwellings between 925 and 1125 A.D. The twin rock spires and the Great House Pueblo were instrumental to the area being included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Despite its well-recognized historic and cultural values, and the generous efforts of our community's volunteers, Chimney Rock lacks the protection it deserves. National monument designation would provide that protection, and help to ensure the area's stewardship into the future. In addition, the recognition provided by national monument designation would provide a much-needed economic boost to our community, which continues to suffer from one of the highest unemployment rates in Colorado. The increased visitation and associated tourism spending associated with national monument designation is one reason we are requesting your assistance in securing the protection for the Chimney Rock area at this time.



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We appreciate the strong leadership from our Congressional Delegation, including Senator Michael Bennet who has championed legislation to establish a Chimney Rock National Monument in the last two Congresses. In the House of Representatives, Congressman Scott Tipton has sponsored similar legislation in response to our community's strong support. While we continue to support these legislative efforts, we are interested in considering other available options to achieve similar protections for this nationally significant resource.

We invite you to engage our community in a dialogue regarding establishing a national monument at Chimney Rock via the Antiquities Act. An open and transparent process will continue to be greeted by overwhelming community support. Your favorable consideration of this request would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,


Ross Aragón
Mayor

CC: The Honorable Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture

