

Rio Grande Sierran

NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

ELECTIONS ISSUE 2002

For the Environment? Bill Richardson for Governor!

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club has endorsed Bill Richardson for Governor (see The Sierran, July/August 2002). This article highlights Richardson's environmental track record and the vision he's stated during his campaign to protect New Mexico's environment and the health of its citizens. To learn how you can help with the campaign, please see the box on the back page.

Bill Richardson's commitment to New Mexico and to the environment goes back nearly 20 years when he was first elected to New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District. While some focus on Richardson's tenure as secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy (during which he initiated a host of renewable-energy and energy-efficiency programs), he had established himself as a leading champion for the environment during his 15 years as a Congressman from New Mexico.

The national League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is a non-partisan organization that monitors legislators' environmental voting performance. LCV gave Richardson a "lifetime score" of 82% as a Representative from 1983-1997. This places him in the top 10% of environ-

mental leaders in Congress during the past two decades.

While it's impossible to present all of Richardson's accomplishments in the space allotted, the following demonstrate that his commitment to the environment and public health is broad-based. If you care about wilderness and public lands, Bill Richardson sponsored legislation that promoted the establishment of the Jemez National Recreation Area, Petroglyphs National Monument, and reaches of the Rio Grande, Jemez, and Pecos Rivers as Wild and Scenic Rivers. If air and water pollution are a concern to you, Richardson fought to defend the Clean Air Act from industry challenges and to increase the effectiveness of enforcing the Clean Water Act.

Public access to information and involvement in the process of permitting industrial facilities are critical to prevent or at least minimize environmental contamination in our communities. Richardson worked to strengthen Community-Right-to-Know provisions that ensure that citizens have a say in industry's use of toxic chemicals and generation of hazardous wastes in our neighborhoods.

Furthermore, Richardson addressed global environmental issues by sponsoring legislation to reduce chemicals that deplete the ozone layer and to stabilize carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions that contribute to global warming.

The positions that Richardson has outlined during his gubernatorial campaign reinforce his

(continued on back page)



Bill Richardson • Governor
2929 Coors Boulevard, NW
Suite 102
Albuquerque, NM 87102
944-7400
e-mail: richardsonforgovernor@yahoo.com

Gloria Tristani: Help Elect a Second Pro-Environment U.S. Senator

On November 5, 2002, we have an opportunity to elect a second pro-environment Senator from New Mexico—and retire one who consistently votes against the environment in favor of big business and greedy corporate executives. Gloria Tristani is the Democratic candidate for United States Senate running against 30-year Republican incumbent Pete Domenici. The choice this November could not be clearer—re-elect Pete Domenici who received a score of "0" from the League of Conservation Voters, or elect Gloria Tristani, a candidate with strong environmental credentials. Electing Gloria Tristani to join Jeff Bingaman in the U.S. Senate would be equal to getting two pro-environment votes instead of none—as Domenici's votes almost always cancel out Senator Bingaman's.

Tristani's Views on the Environment

Gloria believes that we need to be extremely careful to match development—both residential and economic—to our resources, especially our air and water quality and supply. These balanced growth equations are complicated; however, she believes that we cannot afford a growth-at-any-cost

(continued on page 7)



Gloria Tristani • U.S. Senate
P.O. Box 35772
Albuquerque, NM 87176
265-5638
www.gloriaforsenate.com

2002 Endorsements

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club has endorsed:

- **Bill Richardson** for Governor;
- **Gloria Tristani** for U.S. Senate;
- **Richard Romero** for U.S. Congress, District 1;
- **Tom Udall** for United Congress, District 3; and
- **Shirley Baca** for Public Regulation Commission, District 5.

The Chapter has also endorsed the following candidates for the New Mexico House of Representatives:

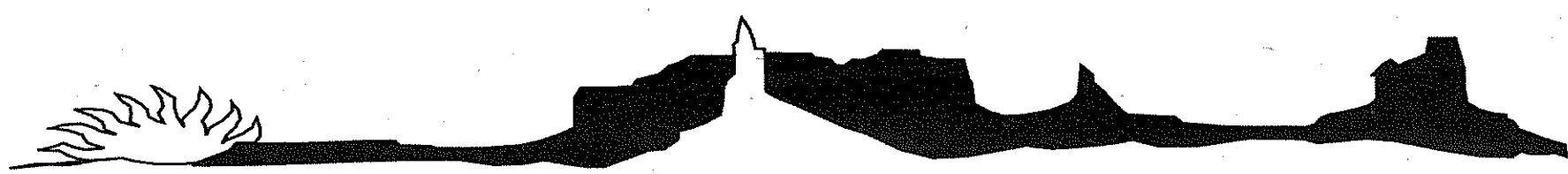
- District 11—**Rick Miera**, incumbent
- District 14—**Miguel Garcia**, incumbent
- District 15—**Steve Archibeque**
- District 19—**Sheryl Williams Stapleton**, incumbent
- District 21—**Mimi Stewart**, incumbent
- District 33—**J. Paul Taylor**, incumbent
- District 40—**Nick L. Salazar**, incumbent
- District 47—**Max Coll**, incumbent
- District 69—**W. Ken Martinez**, incumbent



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FOUNDED 1892

RIO GRANDE CHAPTER
SIERRA CLUB
P.O. Box 9191
EL PASO, TX 79983

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Vote!

Tuesday, November 5 (7:00am-7:00pm)

Registering to Vote & Updating Registration

At County Clerk's Offices

Closes October 8

Absentee Voting

Begins
September 26

Closes
November 5, 7:00pm

Apply for an absentee ballot by phoning the County Clerk's Office. The office will mail you an *application*. Return your application. If the County approves your application, the office will send you a ballot. The last ballots are mailed on October 31. Mail or hand-deliver your ballot to the Clerk's Office by 7:00pm on Election Day. Only you can turn in your ballot. You *may not* take your absentee ballot to your regular polling site, and you *may not* vote at your regular polling site on Election Day.

Early Voting

At County Clerk's Offices
& other sites

October 16-November 2 (5:00pm)

You will be asked to provide your social security number; a picture ID is not required.

Help the Coordinated Campaign

How: Phone banks

When: Throughout October
Sunday-Thurs. (5:00-8:00pm)

Where: Plaza del Sol Shopping Center
720 St. Michael's Drive
Santa Fe (just west of Smith's)

Contact: Edward Sullivan (471-5047)

Phone Banks & Lit Drops for Romero

When: Throughout October
Saturdays (10:00am-4:00pm),
Sundays (12:00 noon-8:00pm)

Where: Romero Headquarters
407 Rio Grande Boulevard
at Mountain

Contact: In Santa Fe, Gwen Wardwell
(438-3060); In Albuquerque,
Headquarters (244-9392)

Sierra Call Nights for Romero

When: October 10, 14 & 17
(6:00-8:30pm)

Where: Romero Headquarters
407 Rio Grande Boulevard
at Mountain across from
Old Town

Contact: In Albuquerque, Camilla
Feibelman (244-9392)

RIO GRANDE CHAPTER DIRECTORY

www.riogrande.sierraclub.org

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Ted Mertig, <i>El Paso Group</i>	915/852-3011	tmertig@earthlink.net
Margot Wilson, <i>Southern Group</i>	744-5860	margotwilson40@hotmail.com

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	Cliff Larsen	466-2128	clarsen@ix.netcom.com
Rangelands	OPEN		
Trade	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Transportation	Ken Hughes	474-0550	b1family@nets.com
Valles Caldera	Ilse Bleck	662-2358	ibleck@yahoo.com
Wildlife	Liz Walsh	915/747-5421	ewalsh@utep.edu
	Roger Peterson	983-7559	rogpete@aol.com

ACTIVISM

Political	Gwen Wardwell	438-3060	g.wardwell@att.net
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El Paso Group	P.O. Box 9191 • El Paso, TX 79983	915/594-7342
Pajarito Group	P.O. Box 945 • Los Alamos, NM 87544	
Northern Group	621 Old Santa Fe Trail, #10 • Santa Fe, NM 87505	983-2703
Southern Group	P.O. Box 3705 UPB • Las Cruces, NM 88003	522-3035
Southwest Regional Office	812 N. 3rd Street • Phoenix, AZ 85004	602/254-9330, fax 602/258-6533
Sierra Club National	85 Second Street, 2nd Floor • San Francisco, CA 94105	415/977-5500

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A Little Voter Math

If half of American adults are registered to vote, and half of those vote, and candidates win with just over half of the votes cast, then only 12% of our adult population stands behind our elected representatives. Use your vote. You actually carry the weight of four American adults.

Richard Romero Ready To Apply His NM Experience in DC

Richard Romero, candidate for Congress in New Mexico's 1st District, has been a strong advocate for sound environmental policies in the New Mexico State Senate. Now in his campaign for Congress, Romero has outlined his environmental priorities. Romero has been endorsed by the Sierra Club in his bid to unseat incumbent Heather Wilson.

"I'm privileged to have lived my entire life in a state with unmatched natural beauty, and I care deeply about protecting the environment for our children and grandchildren," Romero said. "A healthy environment is a sacred trust—a gift that must be passed on intact from generation to generation."

Romero's commitment to the environment stands in stark contrast to his opponent's, Heather Wilson, who has been named to the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) Dirty Dozen list. Wilson voted to cut funding for the Environmental Protection Agency to enforce clean air and water regulations. She even voted against requiring mining companies to pay for the environmental cleanup of lands they have polluted. Her 14% lifetime LCV ranking is a strong indication of her environmental record.

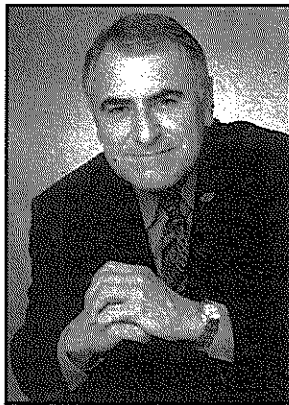
Romero, on the other hand, has built a reputation as a strong advocate for the environment. Romero worked in the New Mexico State Senate to kill an amendment that would have weakened the Hardrock Mining Reform Act, and he has worked to preserve open space and approve the purchase of the Baca Ranch.

"I have a record in Santa Fe as an independent leader who will stand up to special interests to do what is right for our environment," Romero continued, "and now I want to take that same fight to Washington."

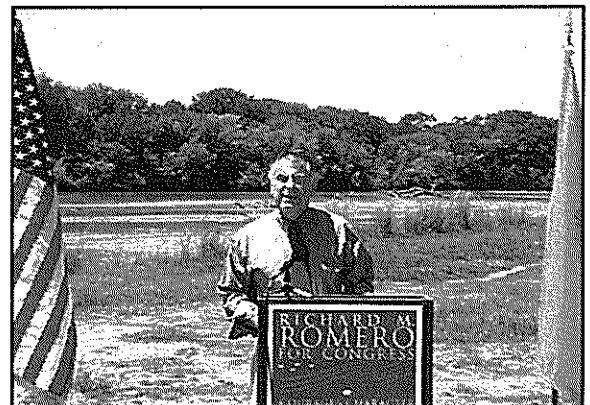
Romero has outlined his priorities to protect the quality of our air and water, preserve our public lands, and promote the use of renewable energy.

Protecting Air Quality—Clean air is a vital resource to New Mexicans and our quality of life—in both our cities and rural areas. Romero will work to keep the Clear Air Act strong and will fight attempts to let polluters off the hook. He supports the reauthorization of the federal transportation bill with more money going toward public transportation.

Preserving Water Quality and Quantity—*Agua es vida*. In Congress, Romero will stand up to protect the quality of drinking water for all Americans. He supports strong, health-based standards for water quality that rely on sound research and empirical data. He believes the federal government should help bear the



Richard Romero • Congress
District 1
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Albuquerque, NM 87125-5006
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Romero has a record in Santa Fe as an independent leader who will stand up to special interests to do what is right for our environment. "Now," he says, "I want to take that same fight to Washington."

financial burden to ensure that all communities meet essential health-based standards.

He opposes *in-situ* leach uranium mining in Crownpoint, which would destroy the pristine quality of the groundwater that the east agency Navajo rely on for drinking water.

Romero will work with state leaders to resolve water-rights issues in our region and find new ways to conserve our most precious natural resource. He'll work to save water and protect our agricultural heritage by supporting federal incentives and investments in low-water irrigation methods and infrastructure, which can help maintain agriculture in the Middle Rio Grande Valley while making water available for conservative municipal use and in-stream flow.

Safeguarding America's Public Lands—New Mexico and the West are blessed with wide-open spaces. In Congress, Romero will fight to keep public lands public, to maintain their plants and animals, to protect these places as sources of inspiration, recreation, and balanced uses. Our national parks should be fully funded so that America's treasures endure forever. He'll work to protect our national forests in ways that restore their ecological health and reduce risks from fire. He supports efforts to protect more Bureau of Land Management areas in New Mexico as wilderness, but also seeks to increase dialogue and bridge misunderstandings among affected parties. He opposes opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil drilling.

Promoting Renewable Energy—New Mexico should be a national and global leader in promoting and utilizing renewable energy. Recent events demonstrate once again that overdependence on fossil fuels is a serious national security, economic, and environmental issue. New Mexico is ranked third among the 50 states for our solar-power potential, and ninth in wind-power potential. With our abundant renewables and our world-class intellectual resources at the national laboratories, renewable energy can lead the way to a sustainable energy future and new economic development. Romero believes that the federal government should invest more in alternative energy development. Research also shows that conservation and more efficient energy use make the best economic and environmental sense. He supports increasing vehicle fuel-economy standards.

Another Reason to Vote for Romero: Incumbent Is In "The Dirty Dozen"

from the League of Conservation Voters

Rep. Heather Wilson (R-NM, District 1) • LCV Rating = 7% • Lifetime Rating = 14%

Heather Wilson has proven that she is out of step with District 1 voters by siding with corporate polluters and earning one of the worst environmental records in Congress. She has consistently worked against reducing toxic pollution, ensuring strong public health standards, and protecting public lands. Her poor environmental record, the absence of a Green Party candidate, and predictions of heavy turnout on Election Day, make Wilson one of the most vulnerable incumbents in the country.

Opposed Cleaning Up Toxic Mercury

Wilson supported policies that could exacerbate mercury contamination in New Mexico. She voted to delay the clean-up of mercury from power plants and fought for a bill to provide coal interests with \$5.8 billion in taxpayer subsidies. Power plants account for roughly 64% of the total mercury emissions in New Mexico, and two of the State's dirtiest coal-fired plants—San Juan and Four Corners—are among the top 50 mercury polluters in the nation.

A mercury-free environment is vital to the State's high quality of life and strong economy. Last year, over 300,000 people spent more than \$175 million in the State on fishing-related

activities, yet 26 of the State's lakes, rivers, and reservoirs have fish-consumption advisories due to high levels of mercury. Eating fish is the most common way for people to become exposed to mercury, since it accumulates in fish and animal tissue in its most toxic form. Even in small amounts, mercury is known to cause neurological damage in children and infants.

Sided With the Uranium Industry Over Public Health

Despite clear environmental and human health risks, Wilson wanted taxpayers to prop up the uranium industry. Part of the \$30 million provided in the 2001 Wilson-sponsored proposal was targeted toward a mining technique that injects chemicals into groundwater sources to release uranium from the surrounding rocks. An environmental health specialist described the resulting mixture as "toxic soup." Contamination from uranium mining has caused major environmental and public health risks in northern New Mexico—as many as 100 homes were built with uranium-tainted bricks, and at least 400 uranium miners have died from lung disease. In Crownpoint, located just northwest of

(continued on page 7)

Steve Archibeque Makes Our Water Supplies and Education His Top Priorities

Elections are about the future. That's why my top two priorities are to improve education and to protect our water supply. Both priorities are vital to our future opportunities and quality of life here in New Mexico.

First, we must increase accountability and innovation in our public schools. We owe our students an education that enhances their individual opportunities and recognizes their responsibilities both to themselves and to future generations. These responsibilities include an understanding of our environment. There is no substitute for a quality education that expands personal horizons while revealing the connections we all have to each other and to the surrounding world that sustains us.

Second, we must address our water crisis here in New Mexico. Years of poor planning and a lack of political leadership have left us struggling to find a coherent solution to our growing water problems. We need to send representatives to the Legislature who understand the urgency of finding long-term solutions to our water challenges that protect our ecosystems and environment. I propose three top priorities for our water policy:

- statewide planning,
- better resource management, and
- effective conservation programs.

Complete and accurate information is essential to make equitable and effective water poli-

cies. A statewide water plan will provide the data we need to compare supply with demand and identify strategies that distribute water fairly. We should integrate the regional, municipal, and community water plans that are complete or underway, and then fill in the gaps. We should also commit resources to accelerating the State

Engineer's computerization of water-rights records into WATERS (the Water Administration Technical Engineering Resource System).

The State Engineer says that only 15% of the water rights in New Mexico have final adjudication decrees, with 85% awaiting final determination. These ambiguities delay critical decision making and prevent effective water management. I support a variety of measures to expedite the adjudication of water rights, including:

- the creation of a special Water Court, and
- the use of administrative hearings and mediation to address the current backlog.



Steve Archibeque • State House
District 15
10346 2nd Street NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114
897-2164
sarchibeque@hotmail.com

We should place a priority on improving the metering and monitoring of our water use throughout the State. Understanding and protecting our precious water resources are worth this investment.

Effective conservation programs are the fastest and least expensive approach to addressing our water needs. By effective, I mean programs:

- that are understood and accepted by the public, and
- that are based on incentives that reward water saving.

Greater awareness will help bring our *per capita* use in line with comparable populations and activities in the region. We must also address the current disincentives to reduce water use, particularly for agricultural users. A variety of approaches, often referred to as "water banking," would encourage conservation and create the financial incentives to do so.

We need state representatives who will put water and conservation issues at the top of the State's agenda. With your support, I want to be a leader on conservation issues in the New Mexico Legislature.

Steve Archibeque is running to replace John Sanchez. Born and raised in the North Valley, Steve recently left the Public Defender's Office to work with Bill Gordon and Associates as a family law attorney.

Club Endorses Environmental Stalwart Mimi Stewart

It should come as no surprise that the Sierra Club has once again endorsed State Representative Mimi Stewart in her quest for re-election in House District 21. Mimi Stewart is among the strongest voices in the Roundhouse for sensible environmental policy. As one of New Mexico's "environmental champions," Representative Stewart has consistently voted to protect New Mexico's land, water, and wildlife from exploitation by special interests. For example, when corporate interests pushed for "takings" legislation that would have threatened New Mexico's ability to regulate environmentally destructive activities, Stewart countered with "givings" legislation that would hold them accountable for the consequences of their actions. In the 2001 legislative session, Mimi Stewart continued her record of environmental advocacy by working closely with the Wild Friends group to sponsor and pass several pieces of legislation. She successfully pushed for the passage of the Wildlife Violator Act to crack down on poaching, and she sponsored legislation supporting the conservation of the black-tailed prairie dog. Wild Friends is a program associated with the Wildlife Law Center, which empowers children to learn the legislative process firsthand by lobbying for wildlife-friendly proposals.

Through her hard work in the legislature, Mimi has earned the respect of many committed conservationists. Sierra Club lobbyist Doug Frasier had this to say: "Mimi Stewart is a rock

solid vote for the environment in New Mexico. She obviously cares deeply about our land and water, and the Club has always been able to count on her to vote her conscience."

That sort of sentiment is not unusual among Sierra Club members. Blair Brown and Susan Gorman are both long-time Sierra Club activists who live in District 21.

Blair and Susan volunteer their time on Mimi Stewart's campaign. They know how hard she works for better land-use and water policies. Having been active in water policy for years, Susan Gorman had this to say, "I don't mind giving up my weekends to knock on doors for Mimi Stewart. Her commitment to better water management in New Mexico is something for which we can all be grateful. New Mexicans know water really is life. Mimi Stewart takes that sentiment to the Roundhouse for us."

In fact, Representative Stewart plans to concentrate on water conservation and management in the 2003 session, should she be re-elected.



Mimi Stewart • State House
District 21 (incumbent)
313 Moon NE
Albuquerque, NM 87123
880-8249 ext. 113
mstewart@nedcomm.nm.org



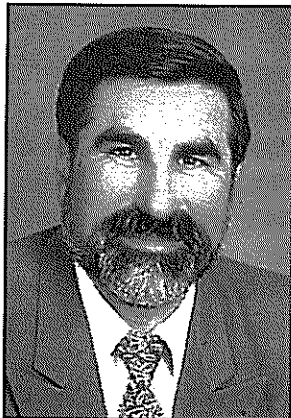
Mimi Stewart is a teacher, representing Bernalillo County. She is Chair of the Government and Urban Affairs Committee and a member of the Judiciary Committee.

She is currently working on a proposal to make well designed and environmentally responsible graywater systems legal in New Mexico. Graywater has been successfully employed in other states as a means of reducing overall water use.

Mimi Stewart is the kind of public servant that the Sierra Club can endorse without reservation. She works hard for District 21, and she works hard for New Mexico's environment. If you would like to volunteer on the Stewart campaign, please call her at 275-2355.

Sierra Club Endorses Seven State House Candidates

Rick Miera is a businessman serving his sixth term from a central Albuquerque district. He is Chairman of the Legislative Education Study Committee, and a member of the Labor and Human Resources Committee.



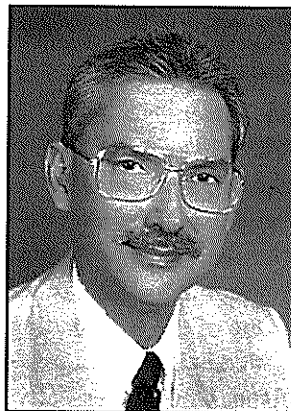
Rick Miera
State House

District 11
1011 Forrester NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
843-6641
house@state.nm.us

Statement—

First, and foremost, we must balance the budget. Then we must provide sufficient resources to the classroom so that we can lift up our public education to levels competitive with surrounding states. I will work to fully fund and expand economic-development opportunities in the State, particularly with the needed funding for preservation and creation of sustainable water policies.

Miguel Garcia is a teacher, representing a southwest Albuquerque district. He serves on the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee.



Miguel Garcia
State House

District 14 (incumbent)
1118 La Font Road SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105
877-8131
miguel.garcia@state.nm.us

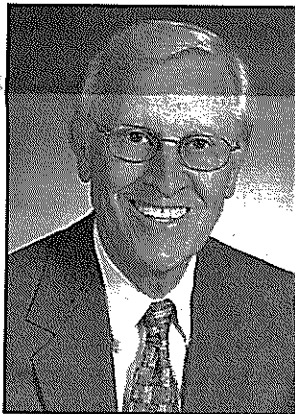
Sheryl Williams Stapleton is an assistant school principal. She represents a southcentral Albuquerque district.



Sheryl Williams Stapleton
State House

District 19 (incumbent)
P.O. Box 25385
Albuquerque, NM 87125
265-6089
sheryl.stapleton@state.nm.us

J. Paul Taylor, a retired educator from Mesilla, has represented Doña Ana for eight terms. He is a member of the Appropriations and Finance Committee, and the Voters and Elections Committee.



J. Paul Taylor
State House

District 33 (incumbent)
Box 133 • Mesilla NM 88046
852-4178
house@state.nm.us

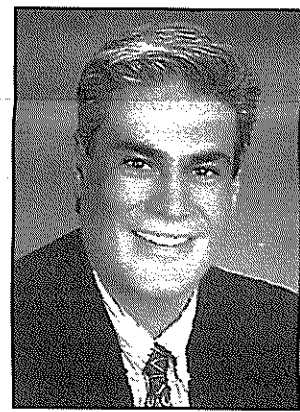
Nick Salazar has served in the House for 30 years. He represents a northern New Mexico district and lives at San Juan Pueblo. He is a member of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee.



Nick Salazar • State House

District 40 (incumbent)
P.O. Box 1076
San Juan Pueblo, NM 87566
852-4178
house@state.nm.us

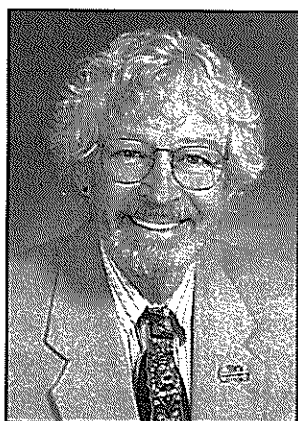
W. Ken Martinez is a strong environmental presence for the Club. Ken is an attorney representing the Grants area. He is chair of the Judiciary Committee and serves on the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee.



W. Ken Martinez
State House

District 69 (incumbent)
P.O. Box 730
Grants, NM 87020
287-8801
wken.martinez@state.nm.us

Max Coll is a small businessman representing a south Santa Fe district. He is Chair of the Appropriations and Finance Committee, and a member of the Voters and Elections Committee.



Max Coll
State House

District 47 (incumbent)
1430 Canyon Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501
986-4320
max.coll@state.nm.us

Statement—

"New Mexico faces many environmental problems—drought brings wildfire dangers and acute awareness of our State's overuse of water. We must balance our water use with our reoccurring water supply, and with sufficient water for our wildlife and riparian areas. We must protect the quality of our air, water, and life for ourselves and our creatures."

Chapter Endorses Baca for PRC

As a former State Representative, **Shirley Baca** served on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. During her tenure in the House, she supported environmental legislation including the Hard Rock Mining Act and the Water Quality Standards Act, and she consistently carried the Beverage Container Recycling Act (the Bottle Bill). She believes in quality standards for clean and safe water, air, waste disposal, landfills, and the multi-use purpose of public lands. She believes that water and water rights are the most important issues facing New Mexico today.

In 2000, she received the community environmental advocacy award from the New Mexico Environmental Law Center. She is a member of the Sierra Club.

As a Public Regulation Commission (PRC) commissioner, she intends to focus on passing

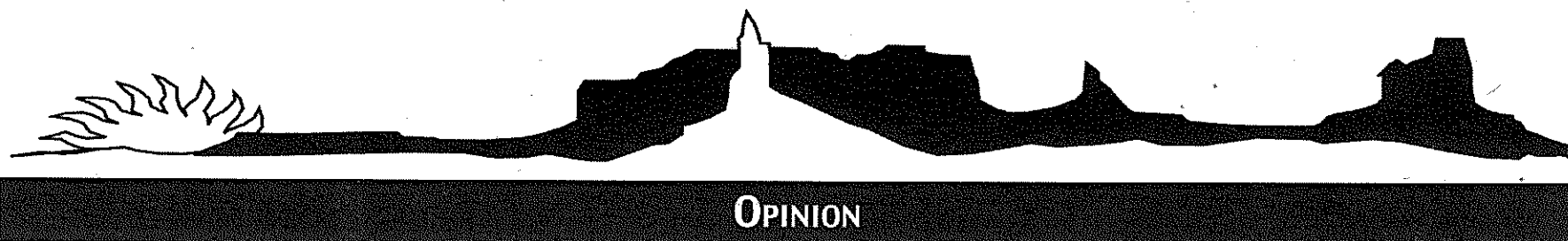
and enforcing regulations that relate to the renewable energy policy for New Mexico. Strict oversight of small energy producers as well as the large energy producers and the passage of strict renewable energies portfolio are among her priorities.

She favors achieving more than 10% renewable energy supply by 2007.



Shirley Baca
Public Regulation
Commission (PRC)
District 5

345 N. Water, Suite #1
Las Cruces, NM 88001
505/524-4588
baca2002@zianet.com



Aiding and Abetting the Destruction of the Earth— The Green Party

by Michael J. Robinson

Last summer, in the heady flush of Republican control of the presidency and Congress, the Cheney-Bush Administration proposed:

- capping the amount the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spends on listing species as threatened and endangered, and
- exempting the agency from lawsuits to put species on the list once its cap has been reached.

This was likely intended as just the first step in gutting the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Tens of millions of acres have been designated as critical habitat under the ESA in recent years, providing a legal tool to prevent their degradation by logging, grazing, mining, oil development, water diversions, urban sprawl, and road construction. Once the pipeline of animals and plants deserving protection was to be dried up, future steps would surely include capping critical habitat designations for species already listed, and finally, redefining critical habitat to allow destructive lands uses.

The proposal was to be heard first in the House of Representatives, where Rep. Joe Skeen (R-NM)—a public-lands rancher, beneficiary of federal predator-killing services, and inveterate opponent of wildlife protection—chairs the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. Rather than attempt a vote on the floor of the House and Senate to eviscerate the popular ESA, the plan was to strip it down in the relative anonymity of the annual funding bills.

Then, Senator James Jeffords (R-VT) defected to the Democratic caucus. The Administration, cognizant that Senate Democrats could kill this bill in a very public manner, told Skeen to quietly drop it. He did.

Party affiliation makes a difference. Probably only 10% of elected officials in either party are concerned at all about the Earth. With some notable (and rare) exceptions, the Republicans included in that 10% believe passionately in destroying wilderness and wildlife—witness Skeen, Rep. Don Young (R-AK), Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ), and of course, former Rep. Dick Cheney (R-WY). The other 90% of the Republican caucus is willing to go along simply to support their colleagues—destroying the Earth brings in campaign money, gets out the vote in the rural West, and is simply part of the party's platform and identity.

On the Democratic side, the 10% who care (generally) want to preserve and protect the wild—notably Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Rep. Mark Udall (D-CO), and Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN). These champions can and often do influence their colleagues who understand that the party's pro-environment image helps bring out the Democratic base.

Today, the Democrats control the Senate by one vote. That means that if, in the November 2002 elections, one more Senate seat goes to Republicans, both the executive and legislative branches will be Republican. It also means that

the Supreme Court will be Republican. Though officially non-partisan, the Court decided the 2000 presidential election by a vote of 5-4.

The president nominates, and the Senate must approve, new appointments to the Court—appointments that last a lifetime.

One of the two leading candidates to be a new Justice is U.S. Solicitor-General Theodore Olson, who successfully argued *Bush vs. Gore* before the Court and, prior to that, represented anti-environmentalists in the Southeast seeking to strip ESA protections from the endangered red wolf on the grounds that the ESA exceeded federal authority. If this interpretation of the

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Constitution gains ascendancy in the Court, the federal government will have no authority (no matter what Congress says) to protect many species and their habitats.

The Supreme Court is important in other respects. The Administration has posited a new judicial category—enemy combatant: a person with no legal rights. Hundreds of people, including two American citizens, have been arrested, incarcerated for months, and denied access to attorneys. The Supreme Court may be the only entity that can restore their rights—and possibly yours in the future. (Don't count on Theodore Olson; his wife died in the atrocities of September 11, 2001, and the notoriously bitter solicitor-general is unlikely to have developed new sympathies for alleged terrorists.)

Democratic control of the Senate is also critical to shining a spotlight on the Cheney-Bush Administration. Senate committees can subpoena administration officials and documents. If the Senate goes Republican, the Administration's abuses of power are far more likely to go unrevealed before the next presidential election in 2004. Like what you've seen so far of the Cheney-Bush reign? It's only a prelude to what we'll see in a second term....

So why is the Green Party running a candidate against one of the Senate's most ardent environmentalists and one of the most endangered Democratic incumbents, Paul Wellstone of Minnesota? Senator Wellstone has always supported wilderness. He quietly squashed a scheme to prematurely remove ESA protections from wolves in his state. He understands the link between corporate power and destruction of natural and human communities, and uses his clout to stymie both.

The Green Party's stance in Minnesota fits an unfortunate pattern. Remember Florida in the 2000 presidential election? In the final tally,

Bush had 537 votes more than Gore. Ralph Nader had 97,488 votes. Even if we assume that 99% of Green voters would not have bothered voting if Nader had not been on the ballot, and that only the remaining 1% would have voted for Al Gore, then without Nader's candidacy, Gore would have won Florida by 438 votes and the Supreme Court would not have decided the election.

Also in 2000, the Green Party ran a candidate against Rep. Mark Udall, who spent his youth exploring wilderness and most of his adulthood introducing children to the wonders of nature, and who votes accordingly in the House. Udall won his race, but in New Mexico, the Greens also ran a candidate against pro-wilderness Democrat John Kelly, who was running against anti-wilderness Rep. Heather Wilson (R). Wilson won with less than half a percentage point (<0.5%) more than 50% of the votes. The Green and Democratic Party totals, had they accrued to just one candidate, would have come within a few hundred votes of ousting her.

This year, the Green Party is also running a candidate for governor of New Mexico, threatening the prospects for Democratic candidate Bill Richardson, who has endorsed wilderness designation and Mexican wolf recovery in the State. But in the congressional race to succeed retiring Rep. Skeen, in which both the Democrat and Republican are anti-Earth, and in a district that includes the highest-ranking Green Party elected official in the State, the Greens are not fielding a candidate. Does their strategy consist solely of knocking off environmentalist Democrats?

If you have reason to believe that a revolution against western consumer society is on its way, and that larger vote totals for Green Party candidates running for high-level offices will help bring it on, then campaigning and voting for them may make sense. But if so, that radical transformation of our society better occur soon—before the ESA is overturned, before Theodore Olson lands in the Supreme Court, before the Court decides that you and I are enemy combatants.

If that societal transformation is not around the corner, there are wild places, imperiled animals and plants, and disenfranchised human beings in desperate need of incremental reforms and small, even temporary victories. With hard work and a little luck, sometimes temporary victories become permanent. Sometimes reforms inculcate new ways of thinking and lead to larger-scale changes. Campaigning against Senator Paul Wellstone and helping turn the Senate over to the Republicans, in the absence of a coherent strategy, is an act of nihilism and an abdication of hope.

Michael J. Robinson lives in the Gila ecosystem of New Mexico. These views are his own; in espousing them he is not representing any of the non-profit institutions with which he is affiliated (michaelr@biologicaldiversity.org).



Tristani (continued from page 1)

attitude that endangers a unique quality of life in New Mexico. Gloria feels we must ask our existing and new industries to plan for efficient water use so that we have an ample supply for careful, sustained urban growth—not the explosive out-of-control growth that destroys our natural systems and open space.

Gloria Tristani believes that the United States must lead the world in progressive energy technology and in the systematic reduction of the world's use of polluting fossil fuels. She understands that our continued reliance on imported oil is a dangerous course for our economy and for our national security, and that we must develop new energy based on renewable and sustainable sources. And Gloria Tristani is opposed to drilling on Otero Mesa and in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

New Mexico's skies are not as clean and beautiful as they once were. In addition to our own pollution, New Mexico inherits waves of air from the dust storms of deforested Mongolia, from coal-burning plants in China, and from other industry and traffic worldwide. The evidence for global climate changes caused by vehicles and industry is compelling. Gloria believes that energy policies that ignore the most credible scenarios of climate changes and their impacts on domestic and world agriculture and human life are irresponsible.

Gloria Tristani is a strong supporter of the Endangered Species Act and believes that, if administered properly, it is vital to maintaining the balance between nature and our own needs and can prevent the harm that can result from a species' disappearance.

As for the many other environmental issues we face on a daily basis, Gloria believes that, in the end, their resolution comes down to personal action and political will. Although our understanding of natural systems and our role in them is far from complete, we do have enough information, sufficient science, and emerging technologies to start the generations-long process of adapting human activity so that our natural environment can begin to recover. Gloria Tristani believes that people are ready to make these efforts.

Pete Domenici Stands For Everything That Environmentalists Are Against!

Pete Domenici is running ads attempting to portray himself as a born-again environmentalist. Nothing could be further from the truth. Pete Domenici continually votes against the environment. He has been a top recipient in the U.S. Senate of contributions from oil and gas political action committees.

Domenici's votes against the environment are abundant and consistent. Here are but a few of the most egregious:

- Domenici sponsored legislation to build a six-lane highway across Petroglyphs National Monument. This road is projected to carry 24,000 vehicles per day, including heavy trucks, generating more urban sprawl on the West Side of Albuquerque.
- Domenici voted against Senator Bingaman's energy legislation to increase automobile fuel-efficiency standards.
- Domenici is a leading proponent of opening drilling in Otero Mesa and has voted to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.
- Domenici voted against allowing more money to be spent on environmental

programs, including \$2.1 billion for the Superfund dedicated to accelerating cleanup of some of the worst toxic-waste sites in the United States.

- Domenici's latest attempt to plunder America's environment is an amendment that he co-sponsored in mid-September 2002 that would allow wholesale logging of ten million acres of federal land under the guise of "preventing forest fires." This amendment would relax the documentation required to log America's protected national forests and thin downed and

Having Gloria Tristani join Jeff Bingaman in the U.S. Senate would allow us to protect New Mexico's precious, yet fragile environment for our children and grandchildren for generations to come. Moreover, electing Gloria Tristani to the U.S. Senate will help keep the Senate in Democratic hands and help counter the Bush Administration's anti-environment agenda.

Please do everything you can to help Gloria Tristani get elected to the U.S. Senate on November 5, 2002.

Accomplishments

Please let your friends and family know
that Domenici is not the moderate environmentalist
that he pretends to be.

unhealthy trees throughout the country. Domenici's amendment would eviscerate the current environmental logging law, which requires the logging industry to inspect the areas in national forests before they cut down trees. It would also severely restrict legal and administrative options available to environmentalists and others who oppose logging America's national forests.

The Sierra Club's endorsement was key to Gloria winning the primary, and it will be very important to her beating Domenici in November. Please let your friends and family know that Domenici is not the moderate environmentalist that he pretends to be.

Gloria Tristani was elected statewide to the New Mexico State Corporation Commission in 1994. She was the first and only woman to serve on this Commission. In 1997, President Clinton appointed Gloria Tristani to the Federal Communications Commission where she served until 2001, when she resigned to run for the U.S. Senate. A lawyer by training, she received her J.D. at the University of New Mexico School of Law and her B.A. from Barnard College at Columbia University. She is the granddaughter of the late U.S. Senator from New Mexico, Dennis Chavez.

For more information about Gloria Tristani, please visit: www.gloriaforsenate.com.

Another Reason To Vote For Romero For State Senate (continued from page 3)

Albuquerque, uranium levels in the groundwater are more than 200 times the amount considered safe by the World Health Organization.

Against Protecting Water Quality & Farmland

Wilson voted against providing New Mexico farmers with a \$58 million increase in conservation funding over the next four years, despite the State's growing need to improve water quality and protect farmland. The intense demand among New Mexico farmers for voluntary land- and water-protection programs in New Mexico has created a \$15-million backlog in enrollment requests as of 2001. Under the farm bill that Wilson supported, 4,600 farmers in the State would be denied assistance to implement conservation practices. Meanwhile, only 18% of the more than 14,000 farms in New Mexico currently receive any benefits from federal farm programs. The State loses thousands of acres of farm and ranchland each year to development and suburban sprawl, and contains 166 impaired waters, many of them due to soil erosion and variety of pollutants.

Public Lands

New Mexico's wealth of public lands are constantly at risk. Yet, Wilson voted against critical land protections on 16 of the 17 major public lands votes included in LCV's National Environmental Scorecard since she came to Congress in 1998. She worked to allow unlimited mine-waste dumping on public lands and to

weaken laws forcing mining companies to pay for pollution cleanup. As New Mexico's largest polluter, the hardrock mining industry released nearly 114 million pounds of toxics into the State's land and air, accounting for more than 90% of the total pollution reported in 2000. Wilson also supported oil and gas drilling in national monuments, the Otero Mesa grasslands, and the Alkali Lakes. She voted against increased funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a program that has benefited areas like Petroglyphs National Monument, Cibola National Forest, and the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River.

The Race

Heather Wilson has never earned more than 50% of the vote in New Mexico's First Congressional District and will face a tough challenge from State Senator Richard Romero (D). Redistricting had a minimal impact, adding only three GOP-leaning precincts to the traditionally swing 1st District, and Romero is expected to run an aggressive campaign if he is able to raise enough money. Political analyst Stuart Rothenberg recently moved the race from "lean Republican" to "toss up/tilt Republican." The absence of a Green Party candidate, who in the past has garnered as much as 15% of the vote, coupled with the heavy turnout expected for gubernatorial candidate Bill Richardson (D), makes Wilson one of the most vulnerable anti-environment incumbents in the country.