

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5943

To withdraw certain Federal land in the Pecos Watershed area of the State of New Mexico from mineral entry, to designate the Thompson Peak Wilderness Area in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 12, 2023

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ (for herself and Ms. STANSBURY) introduced the following bill

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To withdraw certain Federal land in the Pecos Watershed area of the State of New Mexico from mineral entry, to designate the Thompson Peak Wilderness Area in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Pecos Watershed Pro-
5 tection Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. WITHDRAWAL OF FEDERAL LAND IN PECOS WATER-**
2 **SHED AREA, NEW MEXICO.**

3 (a) DEFINITION OF FEDERAL LAND.—In this sec-
4 tion, the term “Federal land” means the Federal land de-
5 picted as “Pecos Withdrawal” on the map entitled “Pro-
6 posed Mineral Withdrawal Legislative Map” and dated
7 September 11, 2023.

8 (b) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to valid rights in exist-
9 ence on the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal
10 land is withdrawn from all forms of—

11 (1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the
12 public land laws;

13 (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining
14 laws; and

15 (3) disposition under all laws pertaining to min-
16 eral and geothermal leasing or mineral materials.

17 **SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF THOMPSON PEAK WILDERNESS**
18 **AREA, NEW MEXICO.**

19 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20 (1) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
21 the Secretary of Agriculture.

22 (2) STATE.—The term “State” means the State
23 of New Mexico.

24 (3) WILDERNESS AREA.—The term “wilderness
25 area” means the Thompson Peak Wilderness Area
26 designated by subsection (b).

1 (b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilder-
2 ness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the approximately
3 11,599 acres of land managed by the Forest Service in
4 the State, as generally depicted on the map entitled “Pro-
5 posed Mineral Withdrawal Legislative Map” and dated
6 September 11, 2023, is designated as a wilderness area
7 and as a component of the National Wilderness Preserva-
8 tion System, to be known as the “Thompson Peak Wilder-
9 ness Area”.

10 (c) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after
12 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
13 shall file a map and legal description of the wilder-
14 ness area with—

15 (A) the Committee on Energy and Natural
16 Resources of the Senate; and

17 (B) the Committee on Natural Resources
18 of the House of Representatives.

19 (2) EFFECT.—The map and legal description
20 filed under paragraph (1) shall have the same force
21 and effect as if included in this Act, except that the
22 Secretary may correct clerical and typographical er-
23 rors in the map and legal description.

24 (3) AVAILABILITY.—The map and legal descrip-
25 tion filed under paragraph (1) shall be on file and

1 available for public inspection in the Office of the
2 Chief of the Forest Service.

3 (d) ADMINISTRATION.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to valid existing
5 rights, the wilderness area shall be administered by
6 the Secretary in accordance with the Wilderness Act
7 (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), except that any reference
8 in that Act to the effective date of that Act shall be
9 considered to be a reference to the date of enact-
10 ment of this Act.

11 (2) ADJACENT MANAGEMENT.—

12 (A) NO PROTECTIVE PERIMETERS OR
13 BUFFER ZONES.—Congress does not intend for
14 the designation of the wilderness area to create
15 a protective perimeter or buffer zone around
16 the wilderness area.

17 (B) NONWILDERNESS ACTIVITIES.—The
18 fact that nonwilderness activities or uses out-
19 side of the wilderness area can be seen or heard
20 from an area within the wilderness area shall
21 not preclude the conduct of the nonwilderness
22 activities or uses outside the boundaries of the
23 wilderness area.

24 (3) FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT.—In ac-
25 cordance with section 4(d)(7) of the Wilderness Act

1 (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(7)), nothing in this section af-
2 fects the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the State
3 with respect to fish and wildlife management in the
4 wilderness area (including the regulation of hunting,
5 fishing, and trapping).

6 (4) GRAZING.—The Secretary shall allow the
7 continuation of the grazing of livestock in the wilder-
8 ness area, if established before the date of enact-
9 ment of this Act, in accordance with—

10 (A) section 4(d)(4) of the Wilderness Act
11 (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(4)); and

12 (B) the guidelines set forth in Appendix A
13 of the report of the Committee on Interior and
14 Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives
15 accompanying H.R. 2570 of the 101st Congress
16 (H. Rept. 101–405).

17 (5) WILDFIRE, INSECT, AND DISEASE CON-
18 TROL.—The Secretary may carry out measures in
19 the wilderness area that the Secretary determines to
20 be necessary to control fire, insects, or diseases, in
21 accordance with section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness
22 Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(1)).

23 (e) INCORPORATION OF ACQUIRED LAND AND INTER-
24 ESTS IN LAND.—Any land or interest in land within the
25 boundaries of the wilderness area that is acquired by the

1 United States after the date of enactment of this Act shall
2 be added to and administered as part of the wilderness
3 area.

4 (f) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to valid existing rights,
5 the wilderness area is withdrawn from—

6 (1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the
7 public land laws;

8 (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining
9 laws; and

10 (3) disposition under all laws relating to min-
11 eral and geothermal leasing or mineral materials.

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