SECURE NEW MEXICO'S LAND HERITAGE

Update the Land Conservation Incentives Act

For Our Land, Water, Economy, & Culture

RGALT's Socorro County conservation project protected 6,210 acres with LCIA and leveraged $3M in USFWS NAWCA funding.

Photo by Vladimir Chaloupka

THE PROBLEM

- **The Land Conservation Incentives Act (LCIA)** has not been updated **since 2008.**
- New Mexico's **land values have skyrocketed** as development has **transformed rural areas** and threatened water supplies.
- The LCIA's tax credits are **capped at 50%** of conservation value, and **$250k total,** which **isn't enough to incentivize protection** of our most threatened landscapes.
- These caps are especially problematic for land rich/cash poor New Mexicans and those with senior water rights.

THE SOLUTION

- It's simple: **update the caps.**
- Increasing the amount of conservation value for which landowners can be compensated to **80%** will allow more small scale landowners and farmers to **keep New Mexico's land heritage alive.**
- Boosting the cap on each transaction to $2M will allow for more landscape-scale projects that **protect watersheds & wildlife.**
- This approach is modeled on that of Colorado's conservation easement tax credit, which has been wildly successful in increasing the pace of conservation.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- The protection of **working lands**, natural **habitat**, and **water resources** is essential to sustain agricultural production, wildlife corridors, watersheds, and ecosystem resiliency.
- Conservation easements **ensure land remains undeveloped** in areas that are critical for **watershed health** and other **ecosystem services** that **sustain New Mexican livelihoods**.
- **Historic and cultural resources** are **vulnerable on private lands**, and conservation easements offer protections for sensitive archeological sites important to our Tribal and Pueblo communities.
- LCIA has been successful in New Mexico, protecting **584,628 acres** with $39,011,614 in tax credits issued – a cost of just **$66 per acre conserved**.
- Increasing the LCIA cap would **help mitigate high transaction costs**, allowing more landowners to protect their land. This would make **conservation more equitable** and accessible to landowners across the economic spectrum, including those in our acequia and traditional communities who have been stewarding their lands for generations.

Protecting land and water helps sustain working **agricultural lands**, **wildlife habitat**, outdoor **recreation**, **scenic vistas**, and our **cultural heritage**, which are cherished by both urban and rural communities.

SUPPORTED BY:

New Mexico Land Conservancy
Conserving Land. Preserving Heritage.

Santa Fe Conservation Trust

Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust

Ogallala Land & Water Conservancy
Securing the Future

Taos Land Trust