

*Wildlife and Hunting Heritage
Conservation Council*

April 27, 2012

Mr. Robert Abbey, Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Possible Closure of the Sonoran Desert National Monument to Recreational Shooting

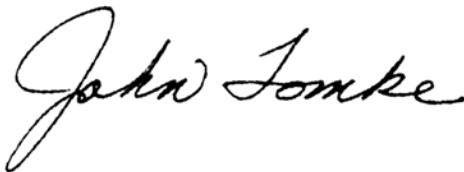
Director Abbey:

Thank you for meeting with me and members of the Council's Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee on February 10th to discuss the potential closure of the Sonoran Desert National Monument to recreational shooting. BLM staff followed up with a detailed presentation on the Sonoran for the full Council during its meeting the following week.

The Council is troubled about the impact of irresponsible outdoor recreational activities to natural resources of the Sonoran Desert National Monument such as saguaro cactus, irreplaceable cultural resources such as petroglyphs, as well as threats to human safety. However, the Council is concerned that the total closure of the monument's one-half million acres to recreational shooters represents an unwarranted action against a single user group.

A Council ad hoc group including Jeff Crane, Robert Model, and Steve Sanetti conducted a site visit to the Sonoran Desert National Monument on April 10th to view the property first-hand and collect information about the challenges surrounding management of the monument. BLM state director Ray Suazo and numerous field staff hosted the site visit and helped craft a very informative and valuable trip. The full Council will receive a report from this ad hoc group on a May 11th teleconference, and will discuss alternatives to a total closure of the Sonoran Desert National Monument. I urge you to consider the Council's recommendations prior to publishing the proposed plan.

Sincerely,



John Tomke, Chair
Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council

Cc: Secretary Ken Salazar, Department of the Interior

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