

# Reader View: BLM land doesn't allow for Verde line

Robert Redford | Posted: Saturday, December 31, 2016 7:00 pm

As a 36-year resident of Santa Fe County, I would like to voice my concern over the proposal to build a transmission line on federal, private and tribal lands through the valleys of Española and Pojoaque. I first came to New Mexico in 1972 to explore, and then returned in 1980 to film *The Milagro Beanfield War*. I chose then to sink deep roots because of the state's diverse cultural landscape and people.

I've been following this issue over several months in the local papers and understand the proposed development has created concern among community members.

Though I am not in favor of this project, I want to voice my support and respect for the sovereignty of the tribes and their right to govern and manage their land as they see fit.

Whatever the outcome of this project, I believe it is possible to move through this process together with respect.

My comments are focused on the 10 miles of federal public land. It seems there is a great deal of confusion and uncertainty surrounding the purpose, need and economic benefit of this proposal to citizens of New Mexico. It's no secret why the film industry is attracted to New Mexico; its scenic vistas are unparalleled, and I believe the state and its citizens have benefited economically from this symbiotic relationship. If this development is allowed to move forward, it will forever alter one of New Mexico's scenic and cultural landscapes.

This land belongs to all of us, and we have a say in what happens. In fact, we've already had a say. After years of gathering public comment, and inventorying the scenic values of this very landscape, the Bureau of Land Management classified this area with a Visual Resource Management Class II designation, with the charge "to retain the existing character of the landscape."

Simply put, under the existing classification, the transmission project can't be built on BLM land. Yet because of pressure from the developer, the BLM is considering changing that classification, setting this public process in motion.

Change is constant — our community has been and always will be presented with changes, be it in leadership, ownership, etc.



Reader View: BLM land doesn't allow for Verde line

Robert Redford. Chris Pizzello/Invision/AP file photo

My commitment and focus has been, and will remain, to ensure that the history, land and people of this special and unique area are honored, protected and not taken for granted. The BLM is accepting comments until Jan. 5, and I urge all concerned to contact the BLM, as well as their local, state and federal leaders to voice their opinions.

*Robert Redford is an actor, director and environmental advocate.*