

August 5, 2003

The Honorable Bill Richardson
Office of the Governor
State Capitol, Room 400
Santa Fe NM 87501

Dear Governor Richardson,

I write on behalf of The New Mexico Conference of Churches. In case you are unaware you will see from our stationary that members of the Conference include the three Roman Catholic Dioceses of New Mexico as well as the traditional mainline Protestant denominations. These faith traditions represent over 600,000 New Mexicans. As you certainly know these 600,000 people reflect the broad, moderate people of faith in New Mexico.

Our member churches have a long, historic investment in education in this state. Our member denominations were the first to begin schools in the state. Many of the native New Mexico teachers were educated in schools begun by the early Roman Catholic and Protestant teachers and schools. Churches have an deep and ongoing concern for education in this state. I believe our past and present support for learning and institutions of learning give us a vested interest in the future of public education in this state.

The New Mexico Conference of Churches has studied the Field Review Draft of the 2003 Science Standards. Based on this study the Executive Committee of the Conference has authorized me to write on behalf of this organization in support of the excellent 2003 Science Standards. We believe the standards are outstanding and we can offer no improvement upon the excellent work done by the committee. The State Department of Education has done an exemplary job and we only wish other states could meet the achievements we believe the New Mexico Department of Education is on the verge of reaching.

We are aware that not everyone in the State can be totally pleased with any curriculum. However, the Science Standards are truly excellent and the great majority of New Mexicans, and people of faith, would agree that the Committee has achieved a science standard of a very high degree.

The Conferences evaluation of the Science Standards is that our State Department of Education has done the best possible job of crafting the evolution and Earth science language, considering the many goals such as constitutionality, preparation of students for college and respect for a variety of beliefs and belief systems.

The New Mexico Conference of Churches hopes the Board will stand by excellence and not be swayed by extreme positions. We encourage the Board not to amend the language of the Standards nor delay the process any further. These standards are as good as they will get!

Sincerely yours,

The Rev. Dr. Barbara E. Dua
Executive Director