

S.A.C.P.A.

Southern Arizona Cattlemen's Protective Association

8200 E Box Canyon Rd, Green Valley AZ 85614



Governor Doug Ducey
Ninth Floor, Arizona State Capitol
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

cc: Karen Fann, Arizona State Senate President
cc: Sine Kerr, Arizona Senate Chairman: Natural Resources, Energy and Water

May 23, 2022

RE: Arizona Game and Fish Commissioner Appointment

Honorable Governor Ducey,

The Southern Arizona Cattlemen's Protective Association (SACPA) is an all-volunteer organization that works for the benefit of cattle ranchers from Pinal, Pima, and Santa Cruz Counties. I am writing on behalf of SACPA to encourage you to appoint Jim O'Haco to Arizona Game and Fish Commission.

Mr. O'Haco is eminently qualified for the position. To begin with, he has stated that it has been his lifelong dream to serve as an Arizona Game and Fish Commissioner. His two main objectives are to manage and protect fish and wildlife habitat; and to help more young people to get out and respectfully enjoy the great outdoors. Rural ranchers and hunters in Arizona are the hands-on community who steward, protect, and restore the lands where Arizona's wildlife live. As a retired third-generation cattle rancher from Coconino County as a life-long hunter and fisherman, Mr. O'Haco truly represents the heart and soul of RURAL Arizona. He has the time, energy and enthusiasm to make a positive difference as an Arizona Game and Fish Commissioner.

Mr. O'Haco graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in Animal Sciences and a minor in Range Management. He has dedicated his entire life to stewarding the land and the ranch he grew up on, working together with state and federal agencies as well as recreational land users, and caring for the wildlife and natural resources. He has served 25 years as a Supervisor in the Coconino Natural Resource Conservation District. He has served on numerous public committees. He also served two years as the President of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association, an organization that represents some 2,000 Arizona ranches.

In 2017 the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's (NCBA) honored Mr. O'Haco as the top national recipient of the Environmental Stewardship Award. They recognized him for his proven commitment to protecting the environment and improving fish and wildlife habitats while operating a profitable cattle operation. The award is co-sponsored by the NCBA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Over the past couple of decades, Mr. O'Haco

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has led a continuous project working with volunteers from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, agents from the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other interested parties, to significantly enhance water resources across his 60,000 acre ranch near Winslow. The ranch is a combination of deeded, State, Forest Service, and BLM lands. Over the last two decades, the "High Well" project has resulted in water lines extending from a well on the Mogollon Rim to 35 water troughs across the entire 60,000-acre ranch. More than 40 miles of water lines have been installed.

This project has provided water to wildlife and cattle throughout many dry years, reduced the concentration of animals around water tanks, and improved forage production by more evenly distributing grazing pressure. In addition, the system enhances the "fair chase" aspect of hunting by allowing game animals to spread out evenly across Unit 4A. When the O'Haco Cattle Company rotates cattle out of a pasture, they continue to maintain the unused water troughs and keep them full for the year-round benefit of the wildlife. Moreover, Mr. O'Haco has significantly modified his fences to enhance wildlife safety. He also removed and mulched 14,000 acres of invasive juniper, increasing native grass production by about forty percent.

Naturally, these stewardship investments have turned Mr. O'Haco's ranch into a sportsman's paradise. The ranch provides habitat to eight out of the Arizona Big Ten game species. In a spirit of cooperation and his desire to get more young Arizonans outdoors, Jim O'Haco allows hunters seasonal access on the deeded 27,000 acres of the 60,000 acre ranch.

In conclusion, Mr. O'Haco is supremely qualified to serve on the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. He has a proven track record of successful management, a proven ability to work with all kinds of agencies and individuals. He is a recognized leader by the rural Arizonans whose heritage and livelihoods depend on improving the land for livestock and wildlife. Above all, he has an intense desire to contribute his years of management experience and exceptional talent to improve wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation in Arizona.

Please select Mr. O'Haco to serve on the Arizona Game and Fish Commission.

Sincerely,

Clay Parsons

President, Southern Arizona Cattlemen's Protective Association