

# Protect our land: Check out state's easement program

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For in addition to protecting the state's precious and dwindling open spaces from development, the measure benefits land-rich, income-poor landowners by giving them tax breaks — up to \$250,000 — that can either be used or, get this, sold.

That means those who don't want or need the tax credit can sell the breaks on the open market and plant the profits back into land maintenance, upkeep, restoration or improvements, among others.

As only the third state to offer such credits, New Mexico has the benefit of learning from Colorado's mistakes. Strict state oversight should fence corruption out of the equation.

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We urge landowners to contact Ernie Atencio at the Taos Land Trust to learn more about the program.

Any measure that promotes environmental responsibility, protects open space and provides some tangible financial relief will go a long way toward ensuring that Taos' land legacy remains firmly grounded ... and protected.