



Rio Arriba
Board of County Commissioners

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Moises A. Morales, Jr.
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District II

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DEPUTY MANAGER
Linda J. Padilla

RESOLUTION 2026-057

**A RESOLUTION OPPOSING URANIUM EXPLORATION AND POTENTIAL MINING
ACTIVITIES IN THE CARSON NATIONAL FOREST AND REQUESTING A FULL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND ROBUST PUBLIC AND TRIBAL
CONSULTATION**

WHEREAS, the Carson National Forest is located within Rio Arriba County and contains the headwaters of the Rio Chama watershed, which supplies drinking water, irrigation water, and ecological resources to communities throughout northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Rio Chama is a principal tributary of the Rio Grande, and the quality and quantity of water originating in the Carson National Forest directly affect acequia systems, shallow domestic wells, agricultural operations, tribal communities, and downstream users; and

WHEREAS, acequia systems and traditional agricultural practices in Rio Arriba County depend upon clean and reliable surface and groundwater resources, which constitute critical water infrastructure essential to the County's economy, culture, and public health; and

WHEREAS, Gamma Resources Ltd. has proposed uranium exploration activities within the Carson National Forest, including exploratory drilling and potential expansion into deeper extraction activities; and

WHEREAS, uranium exploration and mining activities present a risk of long-term contamination of groundwater and surface water resources, with impacts that may persist for decades and extend beyond the immediate project area; and

WHEREAS, the region has a documented history of uranium-related environmental impacts, including legacy contamination and federally conducted activities such as Project Gasbuggy, demonstrating the long-term risks associated with subsurface disturbance and radioactive materials; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 4-37-1, Rio Arriba County is authorized to adopt measures necessary and proper to provide for the safety, preserve the health, and promote the welfare of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Rio Arriba County Board of County Commissioners finds that protection of the Rio Chama watershed, acequia systems, shallow wells, and associated cultural and agricultural resources is necessary to safeguard public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the County recognizes that permitting decisions for activities on federal lands are within the jurisdiction of the United States Forest Service and other federal agencies, but the

County retains a strong interest in participating in environmental review processes and advocating for the protection of local resources; and

WHEREAS, members of New Mexico's congressional delegation, including Martin Heinrich, Ben Ray Luján, and Teresa Leger Fernández, have expressed opposition to uranium exploration in the Carson National Forest and have called for a full environmental review of the proposed project; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners finds that early and meaningful consultation with local governments, acequia associations, tribal governments, and affected communities is essential to any federal environmental review process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF RIO ARRIBA COUNTY:

- 1. Opposition.** The Board of County Commissioners formally opposes uranium exploration, drilling, and potential mining activities within the Carson National Forest and the headwaters of the Rio Chama watershed due to the substantial risks posed to water resources, public health, agriculture, and cultural traditions.
- 2. Request for Environmental Impact Statement.** The Board of County Commissioners formally requests that the United States Forest Service require a full Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act for any proposed uranium exploration or related activities in the Carson National Forest based on the potential for significant environmental impacts.
- 3. Baseline Data and Cumulative Impact Analysis.** The Board of County Commissioners requests that any environmental review include comprehensive baseline groundwater and surface water quality data, analysis of cumulative impacts including legacy uranium contamination, and evaluation of impacts to acequia systems, shallow domestic wells, springs, riparian areas, and downstream users of the Rio Grande.
- 4. Public and Tribal Consultation.** The Board of County Commissioners requests robust and early consultation, including government-to-government consultation with tribal nations, engagement with acequia associations and land grants, and public meetings within affected communities in Rio Arriba County.
- 5. Administration.** The County Manager and appropriate County departments are directed to participate in all available federal and state review processes, coordinate with tribal governments and relevant agencies, and develop findings and technical information to support protection of County water resources and infrastructure.
- 6. Transmission.** The County Manager is directed to transmit this Resolution to the United States Forest Service, New Mexico's congressional delegation, the Office of the Governor, and relevant state agencies.

APPROVED, ADOPTED AND RESOLVED ON THIS 23rd DAY OF APRIL 2026.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RIO ARRIBA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

Moises A. Morales, Jr. For/Against
Chairman, District III

Alex M. Naranjo For/Against
Commissioner, District II

Brandon M. Bustos For/Against
Commissioner, District III

ATTEST: _____
Sarah Archuleta
Rio Arriba County Clerk