

1 A MEMORIAL

2 RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER FOR THE FUTURE OF
3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN TAOS COUNTY AND
4 SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN ENABLING THE
5 DIVESTMENT OF FORMER QUESTA MINE WATER RIGHTS FOR THE BENEFIT
6 OF THE VILLAGE OF QUESTA AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

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8 WHEREAS, the former Questa mine possesses adjudicated
9 water rights; and

10 WHEREAS, the former Questa mine permanently ceased
11 mining operations in 2014; and

12 WHEREAS, the village of Questa and many communities
13 throughout northern Taos county are environmental justice
14 communities that are unable to access needed water rights for
15 their efforts at economic development and poverty reduction;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, the village of Questa and the Questa economic
18 development fund identified water resources as a key
19 component of economic diversification and poverty reduction
20 in their 2015 economic development plan; and

21 WHEREAS, the former Questa mine, the village of Questa
22 and the Questa economic development fund have worked in
23 partnership since the completion of the 2015 economic
24 development plan to transfer Questa mine water rights for the
25 benefit of the community; and

1 WHEREAS, the village of Questa and the Questa economic
2 development fund subsequently initiated project development
3 in the areas of affordable housing, light manufacturing,
4 local sustainable agriculture, food security and renewable
5 energy; and

6 WHEREAS, the above-listed projects require access to
7 local water resources; and

8 WHEREAS, the office of the state engineer has the
9 authority to work in partnership with the village of Questa,
10 the Questa economic development fund and the former
11 Questa mine to develop an action plan that supports continued
12 environmental remediation and reclamation of the former mine
13 site while enabling the former mine to concurrently divest of
14 water rights for the benefit of the village of Questa and
15 surrounding communities;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the importance of wise water
18 management and administration to promote economic development
19 and poverty reduction in environmental justice communities be
20 affirmed, while noting that a lack of capacity in state
21 agencies may have hampered the ability of the state agencies
22 to fulfill the agencies' potential to support these efforts;
23 and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the development of an action
25 plan that supports environmental remediation and reclamation

1 of the former mine site while concurrently enabling the
2 divestment of former Questa mine water rights for the benefit
3 of the village of Questa and surrounding communities be
4 deemed beneficial; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this action plan be a
6 collaborative partnership between the state engineer and
7 representatives of the former Questa mine, the village of
8 Questa and the Questa economic development fund; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
10 transmitted to the governor, the state engineer, the
11 interstate stream commission, representatives of the former
12 Questa mine, the mayor of the village of Questa, the
13 Questa economic development fund and the board of county
14 commissioners of Taos county. _____

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