

Daniel R. Barrone, Mayor

Councilmembers:

Darien D. Fernandez

Genevieve Oswald

Billy Romero

Tetsuro Namba

Lupe Martinez, Town Manager



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July 16, 2026

Paul Cordova
District Manager
Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District
17305 US Highway 64-84
Tierra Amarilla, NM 87575

Dear Mr. Cordova:

On behalf of the Town of Taos, enclosed please find a certified copy of Resolution 26-46, adopted by the Town Council on July 14, 2026.

Through this resolution, the Town of Taos expresses its support for the efforts of the Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District and Rio Arriba County to protect Northern New Mexico's watersheds, aquifers, springs, streams, wetlands, acequia systems, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, agricultural resources, and communities.

The resolution also supports comprehensive environmental review of proposed uranium exploration activities within the Chama Basin, including the collection of adequate baseline environmental data, evaluation of cumulative and legacy impacts, meaningful government-to-government consultation with affected tribal nations and pueblos, and robust participation by local governments, acequia associations, land grant communities, and members of the public.

The Town respectfully requests that the enclosed resolution be received and considered in connection with any present or future decisions concerning uranium exploration or development within the Upper Rio Chama watershed and surrounding areas.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued service to the people and communities of Northern New Mexico.

Sincerely,

Denise Martinez
Town Clerk
Town of Taos

Enclosure: Resolution 26-46



RESOLUTION 26-46

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF THE UPPER CHAMA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND RIO ARRIBA COUNTY TO PROTECT NORTHERN NEW MEXICO WATERSHEDS, AQUIFERS, ACEQUIA SYSTEMS, CULTURAL LANDSCAPES, AND COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS in April 2025, the Town of Taos adopted a Right to Nature Resolution affirming its commitment to the stewardship of the lands, waters, ecosystems, and natural systems upon which the people of Taos and Northern New Mexico depend; and

WHEREAS the Town of Taos recognizes that healthy watersheds, rivers, aquifers, springs, wetlands, acequia systems, forests, soils, wildlife habitats, and ecosystems are essential to the health, culture, economy, and identity of Northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS the Town of Taos recognizes that the watersheds, aquifers, forests, wildlife habitats, acequia systems, and cultural landscapes of Northern New Mexico are interconnected, and that stewardship of these systems requires cooperation among local governments, tribal nations, conservation districts, acequia associations, land grants, and community organizations; and

WHEREAS the Upper Rio Chama watershed contains headwaters, streams, springs, wetlands, aquifers, and groundwater resources that support the ecological health, agricultural traditions, wildlife habitat, cultural heritage, and long-term water security of Northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS water resources originating within the Upper Rio Chama watershed contribute to interconnected watershed systems that sustain communities, agriculture, wildlife, ecosystems, and cultural traditions throughout Northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS the acequia systems of Northern New Mexico represent living cultural traditions and continue to support agriculture, food production, community resilience, local economies, and centuries-old patterns of community stewardship; and

WHEREAS New Mexico communities continue to live with the environmental, public health, cultural, and economic impacts associated with historic uranium mining, milling, and waste disposal activities, including contamination of lands and water resources that have required decades of remediation efforts; and

WHEREAS the Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District adopted Resolution 2026-09 expressing concerns regarding proposed uranium exploration activities within the Chama Basin and calling for a moratorium on exploratory drilling pending completion of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement; and

WHEREAS Rio Arriba County adopted Resolution 2026-057 opposing uranium exploration and potential mining activities within the Carson National Forest and the headwaters of the Rio Chama

watershed and requesting a full Environmental Impact Statement and robust public and tribal consultation; and

WHEREAS proposed uranium exploration activities have raised concerns among local governments, tribal nations, conservation districts, acequia associations, land grant communities, landowners, and residents regarding groundwater quality, shallow domestic wells, watershed protection, cultural resources, wildlife habitat, agricultural resources, and long-term environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS meaningful environmental review requires the collection and analysis of baseline environmental data sufficient to evaluate potential impacts to groundwater, surface water, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, agriculture, and community health before exploration activities proceed; and

WHEREAS meaningful government-to-government consultation with affected tribal nations and pueblos is essential to protecting cultural resources, sacred sites, traditional uses, and community interests throughout Northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, where substantial uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts to water resources, ecosystems, cultural landscapes, and human communities, precaution and thorough scientific review are warranted before industrial activities proceed; and

WHEREAS the Town of Taos believes that decisions affecting Northern New Mexico's lands and waters should be guided by principles of stewardship, precaution, transparency, scientific review, ecological responsibility, and intergenerational accountability.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governing Body of the Town of Taos expresses its support for the efforts of the Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District and Rio Arriba County to protect the watersheds, aquifers, springs, streams, wetlands, acequia systems, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, agricultural resources, and communities of Northern New Mexico.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Taos supports the request of the Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District for comprehensive environmental review of proposed uranium exploration activities, including cumulative impact analysis, evaluation of legacy uranium contamination, and assessment of impacts to groundwater, aquifers, springs, streams, wetlands, acequia systems, shallow domestic wells, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, agriculture, and community health.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Taos supports the collection of adequate baseline environmental data necessary to evaluate existing conditions and potential future impacts within the Chama Basin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Taos supports meaningful government-to-government consultation with affected tribal nations and pueblos and encourages robust participation by acequia associations, land grant communities, local governments, and members of the public in all environmental review processes related to uranium exploration and development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Taos encourages state and federal agencies to apply the precautionary principle when evaluating activities that may affect the water resources,

ecological integrity, cultural landscapes, agricultural traditions, and long-term resilience of Northern New Mexico.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governing Body recognizes the Upper Rio Chama watershed as an important component of the interconnected natural systems upon which the people of New Mexico depend and affirms the importance of its long-term protection and stewardship.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Taos reaffirms its commitment to the principles expressed in its Right to Nature Resolution and recognizes the importance of protecting the natural systems upon which present and future generations depend.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk is directed to transmit copies of this Resolution to the United States Secretary of the Interior; the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office; the Regional Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6; the Forest Supervisor of the Carson National Forest; the Regional Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Southwest Region; United States Senator Martin Heinrich; United States Senator Ben Ray Luján; United States Representative Teresa Leger Fernández; the Governor of New Mexico Michelle Luján Grisham; State Senator Bobby Gonzales; State Representative Kristina Ortez; State Representative Susan Herrera; the Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Environment Department; the Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department; the State Engineer of New Mexico; the Director of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission; the Executive Director of the New Mexico Acequia Commission; the Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department; the State Historic Preservation Officer of New Mexico; the Governor of Taos Pueblo; the President of the Jicarilla Apache Nation; the Executive Director of the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council; the Taos County Commission; the Rio Arriba County Commission; the Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District; the Taos Soil and Water Conservation District; the Executive Director of the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts; and the Chair of the New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 14th day of July 2026, at the Regular Meeting of the Town Council by the following vote:

Mayor Pro Tem Genevieve Oswald	<u>Yes</u>
Councilmember Darien D. Fernandez	<u>Yes</u>
Councilmember Billy Romero	<u>Yes</u>
Councilmember Tetsuro Namba	<u>Yes</u>

TOWN OF TAOS


Daniel R. Barrone, Town Mayor

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL:


Lupe E. Martinez, Town Manager

ATTEST:


Denise Martinez, Town Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Signed by:

Phoebe Roderick, Town Attorney