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HOUSE MEMORIAL 54

**54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2020**

INTRODUCED BY

Joseph L. Sanchez

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPORTANCE OF PECOS CANYON AND THE UPPER PECOS WATERSHED AND  
OPPOSING THE EXPLORATORY DRILLING PROJECT PROPOSED FOR THAT  
AREA BY THE AUSTRALIAN CORPORATION NEW WORLD RESOURCES, LTD.,  
AND ITS SUBSIDIARY, COMEXICO, LLC.

WHEREAS, Pecos canyon is the ancestral homeland of the  
Pecos Pueblo; and

WHEREAS, the people of the Pueblo of Cochiti, the Pueblo  
of Jemez, Kewa Pueblo, the Pueblo of Pojoaque and the Pueblo of  
San Felipe continue to exist as sovereign communities in and  
around the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mountains; and

WHEREAS, Pecos canyon attracts tens of thousands of  
visitors every year to hike, camp, fish, picnic, bird-watch,  
hunt and generally recreate; and

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1           WHEREAS, local businesses in the village of Pecos and the  
2 surrounding communities rely upon recreational visitors; and

3           WHEREAS, local outdoor recreation businesses rely upon the  
4 pristine waters of the Pecos river and the solitude offered by  
5 Pecos canyon and its surrounding wild lands; and

6           WHEREAS, water is life, and the headwaters of the Pecos,  
7 Gallinas and Mora rivers and dozens of their tributaries are a  
8 key water source for acequias; and

9           WHEREAS, the headwaters of the Pecos, Gallinas and Mora  
10 rivers and dozens of tributaries are key water sources for  
11 farmers, the village of Pecos, the city of Las Vegas and other  
12 surrounding communities; and

13           WHEREAS, the city of Santa Fe lies within the watershed  
14 that could be affected by the proposed exploratory drilling  
15 operations; and

16           WHEREAS, Indian creek, Doctors creek and Macho creek  
17 contain populations of the Rio Grande cutthroat trout, the  
18 state fish of New Mexico; and

19           WHEREAS, Pecos canyon is home to the Holy Ghost ipomopsis,  
20 a federally endangered plant, and the Mexican spotted owl, a  
21 federally threatened species; and

22           WHEREAS, numerous species of cats, bears and ungulates  
23 reside in Pecos canyon; and

24           WHEREAS, the Pecos wilderness is one of the most visited  
25 wilderness areas in New Mexico, enticing tens of thousands of

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1 visitors every year; and

2 WHEREAS, in 1991, a spring snow melt event carried  
3 contaminants from a previous mining operation into the Pecos  
4 river, killing over ninety thousand fish; and

5 WHEREAS, the cleanup of the 1991 contamination event has  
6 cost the taxpayers of New Mexico at least twenty-eight million  
7 dollars (\$28,000,000); and

8 WHEREAS, the village of Pecos has recovered from this  
9 contamination event and established itself as a destination for  
10 outdoor enthusiasts; and

11 WHEREAS, the cleanup of the previous mining operation is  
12 ongoing; and

13 WHEREAS, in June 2019, Comexico, LLC, applied to the  
14 mining and minerals division of the energy, minerals and  
15 natural resources department for permission to undertake  
16 exploratory drilling with up to thirty drill pads and holes at  
17 eighty-four potential locations in the area of Pecos canyon and  
18 the upper Pecos watershed; and

19 WHEREAS, United States Senator Martin Heinrich opposes the  
20 exploratory drilling proposed by Comexico, LLC; and

21 WHEREAS, Assistant Speaker of the United States House of  
22 Representatives Ben R. Luján opposes the exploratory drilling  
23 proposed by Comexico, LLC;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
25 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Pecos canyon

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1 and the upper Pecos watershed be deemed an inappropriate place  
2 to conduct an exploratory drilling operation and for activities  
3 associated with an exploratory drilling operation; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
5 transmitted to the governor and the secretary of energy,  
6 minerals and natural resources.

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