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SENATE MEMORIAL 69

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2023

INTRODUCED BY

Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales

A MEMORIAL

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

WHEREAS, the former Questa mine possesses adjudicated water rights, all of which are valid for transfer, change of use and environmental remediation or reclamation; and

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

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

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, the village of Questa and the Questa economic
3 development fund identified water resources as a key component
4 of economic diversification and poverty reduction in their 2015
5 economic development plan; and

6 WHEREAS, the former Questa mine, the village of Questa and
7 the Questa economic development fund have worked in partnership
8 since the completion of the 2015 economic development plan to
9 transfer Questa mine water rights for the benefit of the
10 community; and

11 WHEREAS, the village of Questa and the Questa economic
12 development fund subsequently initiated project development in
13 the areas of affordable housing, light manufacturing, local
14 sustainable agriculture, food security and renewable energy;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, the above-listed projects require access to local
17 water resources; and

18 WHEREAS, the office of the state engineer has the
19 authority to work in partnership with the village of Questa,
20 the Questa economic development fund and the former Questa mine
21 to develop an action plan that supports continued environmental
22 remediation and reclamation of the former mine site while
23 enabling the former mine to concurrently divest of water rights
24 for the benefit of the village of Questa and surrounding
25 communities;

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