

1 SENATE MEMORIAL 110

2 **54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2019**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

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10 A MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND SANTA FE COUNTY TO  
12 ENTER INTO A FORMAL PARTNERSHIP FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PLANNING  
13 FOR REMEDIATION OF THE MT. CHALCHIHUITL PROPERTY.

14  
15 WHEREAS, the tricultural heritage of the Cerrillos hills  
16 reflects and honors more than five centuries of intertwined  
17 history among Native Americans, Hispanics and Anglos, making  
18 the Cerrillos hills one of New Mexico's most important historic  
19 and prehistoric cultural landscapes; and

20 WHEREAS, Mt. Chalchihuitl, included in the New Mexico  
21 state register of cultural properties, is the largest and most  
22 significant prehistoric turquoise mine in North America, dating  
23 from around 1000 A.D., with turquoise artifacts found from the  
24 site at Chaco canyon and in places in Mexico, and the turquoise  
25 mine is indisputably the most significant historical feature in

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1 all of the Cerrillos hills; and

2 WHEREAS, on June 12, 2001, the board of county  
3 commissioners of Santa Fe county approved the acquisition of  
4 the Mt. Chalchihuitl property to protect this internationally  
5 significant cultural site; and

6 WHEREAS, Santa Fe county has long completed the due  
7 diligence necessary to acquire this real property, and the  
8 property requires remediation of legacy environmental issues  
9 stemming from the tailings of a long-closed mine, the cash  
10 entry, located east of the Mt. Chalchihuitl site; and

11 WHEREAS, sampling has determined that remediation is  
12 needed to stem contamination that has spread down through an  
13 adjacent property, Cerrillos gravel products, a gravel mine  
14 that has suspended its operations; and

15 WHEREAS, Santa Fe county has resolved to acquire the  
16 Cerrillos gravel products property for remediation; and

17 WHEREAS, further sampling is needed to determine if the  
18 contaminants have reached the Cerrillos hills state park, which  
19 is Santa Fe county open space, the water table and beyond; and

20 WHEREAS, the ground water quality bureau of the department  
21 of environment oversees the voluntary remediation program; and

22 WHEREAS, under the voluntary remediation program, a  
23 prospective owner of a contaminated site, such as Santa Fe  
24 county, may be released from certain environmental liabilities  
25 by remediating the site after acquisition in accordance with a

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1 voluntary remediation agreement with the department of  
2 environment; and

3 WHEREAS, both Santa Fe county and the department of  
4 environment have spent considerable time and money in planning  
5 for a remediation plan, and negotiations are ongoing with the  
6 adjacent land owner;

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
8 OF NEW MEXICO that for the public health and welfare, the  
9 department of environment and Santa Fe county be requested to  
10 enter into a formal partnership for further study and planning  
11 for remediation of the Mt. Chalchihuitl property; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of environment  
13 be requested to release Santa Fe county from certain  
14 environmental liabilities by remediating the site after  
15 acquisition, in accordance with a voluntary remediation  
16 agreement with the department; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
18 transmitted to the board of county commissioners of Santa Fe  
19 county and the secretary of environment.