

SENATE MEMORIAL 69

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

INTRODUCED BY

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This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

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 ~~SCONC~~, ~~all of which are valid for transfer,~~

.226068.1AIC March 17, 2023 (2:30pm)

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~~change of use and environmental remediation or~~
~~reclamation~~←SCONC ; 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; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the development of an action plan that supports environmental remediation and reclamation of the former mine site while concurrently enabling the divestment of former Questa mine water rights for the benefit of the village of Questa and surrounding communities be deemed beneficial; and

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

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

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