

Justin S. Greene
Commissioner, District 1

Lisa Cacari Stone
Commissioner, District 2

Camilla Bustamante
Commissioner, District 3



Adam Fulton Johnson
Commissioner, District 4

Hank Hughes
Commissioner, District 5

Gregory S. Shaffer
County Manager

May 12, 2026

United States Forest Service
Carson National Forest
Attn: James Duran, Forest Supervisor
208 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, NM 87571

Re: Opposition to Proposed Uranium Exploratory Drilling in the Chama Watershed

Dear Mr. Duran,

On behalf of the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners, we write to express our strong opposition to the proposal by Gamma Resources to conduct up to twelve exploratory uranium test wells within the Chama watershed in the Carson National Forest.

The Chama watershed is a vital and irreplaceable water resource for northern New Mexico and directly contributes to the regional water systems that sustain our communities. Santa Fe County relies on these interconnected water sources to support our municipal systems, including the Buckman Direct Diversion (BDD) project, a critical component of the County's and City of Santa Fe's drinking water supply systems. Any contamination or degradation of upstream water sources places this critical infrastructure at risk.

Beyond Santa Fe County, the impacts of this watershed extend far downstream. The Chama River feeds into the Rio Grande system, supporting communities from Española, New Mexico, to Brownsville, Texas. This includes Tribal Nations, major metropolitan areas, and extensive agricultural lands that depend on clean and reliable water for irrigation and food production. The potential risks associated with uranium exploration – particularly to groundwater and surface water – carry consequences that reach well beyond the immediate project area.

Santa Fe County stands in alignment with Martin Heinrich, Ben Ray Luján, and Teresa Leger Fernández in calling for the highest level of environmental review. We respectfully urge the U.S. Forest Service to require a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prior to any consideration of this proposal. Given the scale of potential downstream impacts, a comprehensive analysis is essential.

We further request that the Forest Service pause all permitting and review processes associated with this proposal until:

- A full Environmental Impact Statement is completed;
 - Meaningful government-to-government consultation with affected Tribal Nations is conducted;
- and

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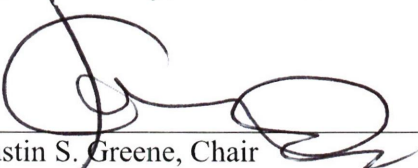
- Robust engagement with local stakeholders – including acequia associations, land grant communities, agricultural producers, and municipal water providers – is ensured.

The proposed exploratory drilling represents a broader expansion of uranium development that threatens the environmental integrity, water security, and cultural heritage of northern New Mexico and the greater Rio Grande basin. Santa Fe County remains firmly committed to protecting our shared water resources and supports efforts to permanently withdraw this area from future mineral development.

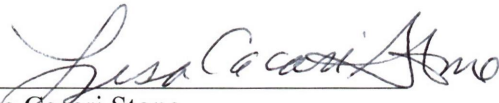
We urge the Forest Service to exercise its responsibility to protect public lands by prioritizing the long-term health of our watersheds, infrastructure, and communities – both locally and downstream. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

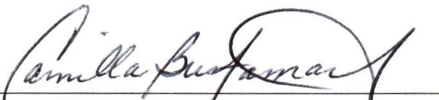
Board of County Commissioners
Santa Fe County, New Mexico



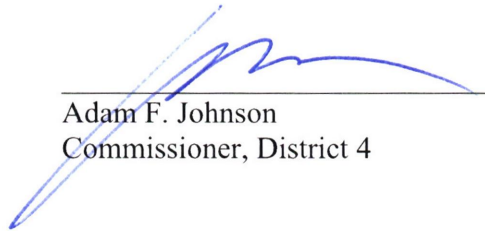
Justin S. Greene, Chair
Commissioner, District 1



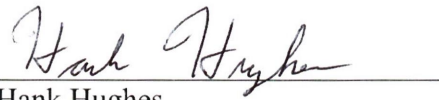
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