

SANTA FE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL BCC MEETING

April 7, 2026

Justin Greene, Chair - District 1
Adam Johnson, Vice Chair - District 4
Camilla Bustamante - District 3
Hank Hughes - District 5
Lisa Cacari Stone - District 2

SFC CLERK RECORDED 05/01/2026

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1. A. This special meeting of the Santa Fe Board of County Commissioners Board was called to order at approximately 10:15 a.m. by Chair Justin Greene in the County Commission Chambers, 102 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The meeting was conducted as a hybrid with participants on line and in person. All votes were taken by roll call.

B. Roll Call

Roll was called by Deputy County Clerk Jennifer Wilson and indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Members Present:

Commissioner Justin Greene, Chair
Commissioner Adam Johnson, Vice Chair [virtually]
Commissioner Camilla Bustamante [virtually]
Commissioner Hank Hughes [virtually]
Commissioner Lisa Cacari Stone [virtually]

Members Excused:

None

C. Approval of Agenda

GREG SHAFFER (County Manager): Thank you, Chair, Commissioners. There are no recommended changes to the agenda as presented from staff. I would note that we did post notice of today's special meeting as well as the substance of the agenda that is before you, which was subsequently posted on our meeting agenda platform at approximately 2:50 p.m. on Friday April 3rd, which again is in excess of 72 hours of today's special meeting. So again, notice of the special meeting was posted along with the substance of the agenda in front of you on Friday afternoon at approximately 2:50 p.m. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you very much, Greg.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Motion to approve.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Second.

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CHAIR GREENE: We got a motion from Commissioner Bustamante and a second from Commissioner Johnson.

The motion to approve the agenda passed by unanimous roll call vote as follows:

Commissioner Bustamante	Aye
Commissioner Cacari Stone	Aye
Commissioner Hughes	Aye
Commissioner Johnson	Aye
Chair Greene	Aye

2. Miscellaneous Action Items

- A. Request Approval of a Letter to the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Concerning a Proposal to Reduce or Eliminate the Buffer Zone Around the Chaco Culture National Historic Park** [Chair Greene read the case caption]

CHAIR GREENE: I just want to make a note that Commissioner Cacari Stone is tuning in from Chaco itself as her backdrop says. It is really beautiful and fitting. And Commissioner Bustamante looks to be tuning in from a hogan somewhere out there. Thank you for appropriately setting yourselves in the right place. If you can't be here, be in Chaco for this momentous moment. Thank you.

I want to thank you all for convening with us today because of the urgency of this matter. We have a motion before us be to approve a letter to the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management concerning the proposal to reduce or eliminate the buffer zone around Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

Just as a matter of background, I prepared this letter. This is an urgent matter. The BLM and the Department of Interior have allowed communities just seven days when typically 30, 60 or 90 days is allowed for this. This seems like they're trying to push something through. It was over a holiday weekend for both Passover and Easter, which was also inappropriate. And so that is the urgency of the matter and why we're meeting in a special meeting here today.

I will open it up for discussion, edits if people have them, and if if not, we'll move on. Commissioner Cacari Stone.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Yes. First of all, thank you, to you and Commissioner Johnson, I see co-sponsored this letter. I think it's really important. Removing a buffer and completely drill, baby drill, and this whole national agenda to just rampage traditional lands and cultural, historical spaces that really teach us about – and that we would lose completely is uncalled for.

And I stand with some of the knowledge protectors and knowledge keepers. I protested with them in the winter, in January in front of the BLM. And I think it's really important we stand in unity, not just with the pueblos, but with the Diné people. And that being said, I had two small additions I wanted to add one, recognizing the Navajo Nation and Diné peoples, and on top of the Pueblo folks that are in the geographic region which we live, as sovereign nations because they're the keepers of the Chaco and the keepers of the knowledge.

The other pieces I wanted to recognize and call out and remind the federal government of their obligations stating back to the Snyder Act, as well as citing some other federal regulations, including the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1978.

I'll post it in the chat, but I just wanted to offer it for consideration. I think the letter is wonderful and really strong, but there were these two caveats I think that the Diné folks would appreciate.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. I appreciate your diligence in the detail. And yes, you missed an earlier version that was a little more aggressive, so thank you for that. Commissioners, are there other aspects here?

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: I don't have any changes. I think Commissioner Cacari Stone's changes are fine.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I concur. And I thank you for that, Commissioner Cacari Stone. I just feel compelled to say things just for the record of what a travesty it is to actually do this, to either proximate and near – same meaning – sacred sites, right; if they were going to Washington, DC and they found natural gas, no one would decide, let's start tearing up – well, maybe they would, with this administration, we don't know. But it's just a travesty to go into the homelands of ancestors, of people who have been carekeepers of the knowledge as Commissioner Cacari Stone has said. I just feel compelled to say that it's just a travesty.

So thank you for pulling this together, and thank you for the additions and recognizing the role of the Diné people and the other legislation that also secures respect for these types of meaningful places.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you, Commissioner Bustamante. Just as another aside, Commissioner Cacari Stone, I think the Jicarilla Apache and the Southern Ute also have ties to the area as well. Is that appropriate to add them in as well?

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I would check on the relationship between the Diné. The Diné are the ones who've been noted in talking on the national news. But I would check with the relationship there before I made any assumption about their coordination in overseeing that. I would agree that, clearly peoples migrated, but I would want to make sure that I wasn't stepping on any toes for those who have been noted and speaking nationally.

CHAIR GREENE: No doubt. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Without getting into like the complexities of indigenous politics in the 11th Century, I think it's appropriate to recognize the Diné as the current stewards of the lands around that area. These are obviously ancestral pueblos so the connection to our northern pueblos is especially relevant, and I think that's the important point to emphasize. This was around before the Apache or the Navajo were in the area.

I just want to say thank you, Commissioner Cacari Stone, for those additions. I think they're good. I think, like Commissioner Greene mentioned this sort of narrow timeline for comment is obviously a cause for concern. Thank you, Chair for organizing this and letting me help you with the draft.

I don't have any additional changes. I think our statement is quite clear. And it's important that we just get that out there. It might inspire others to tack on.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. Excellent. Did we have some edits in line here, Commissioner Cacari Stone, yes, ma'am.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: I just posted it in the Chat a revision to go in the paragraph that recognizes the pueblos and sovereign nations in the area of Santa Fe County, that we also have significant on-off reservation transmigration Diné people who live in Santa Fe County. So I just tweaked that a bit to recognize them that live here. So I just reposted it in the Chat so that to go with the paragraph where we're recognizing the pueblos and then the paragraph where we're calling in and calling up the federal government to do their due diligence and duty according to Historical Snyder Act and the Preservation Act.

CHAIR GREENE: Great. Thank you for citing both law and heritage. Do we have those notes here that we feel that can be incorporated before we go sign this this afternoon? Yes, perfect. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: This is so important that I hope that our communications can do a press release on this letter. I think that way we stand in solidarity and we can post it. I'd like to send it to some of my Diné colleagues and indigenous leaders as well, that we stand with them. So would the staff be willing to do that?

CHAIR GREENE: I see Shawna in the background with two thumbs up. That started with one thumb up and now it's two.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Right on.

CHAIR GREENE: And then I see a thumb up from Commissioner Johnson. Additionally, I think we should send this to our delegation in DC to make sure that they see this.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Absolutely.

CHAIR GREENE: While we're getting this typesetting, so we can continue the discussion here the, the part that I bolded in the draft was meant to show, one our opposition to the short timeline, but actually that, I think our interest would be in the full preservation, right? Not go completely in the other direction. Not oil and gas exploration and not the status quo, but actually returning it to a full expanded preservation and protection area. And then that should be studied, if you're going to study something, give us the option of full protection.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Chair Greene, I wanted to tweak, I'm sorry. I'm a perfectionist in editing. On- off-reservation would not be correct and it would be more like the Navajo Nation and trans migrating urban Diné residence of Santa Fe County. On- off-reservation, the Diné Nation and Navajo Diné folks might not want to say reservation, so I was just tweaking it. But I'll defer to you and Commissioner Johnson on the final tweak here.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: That sounds good to me. I think that's appropriate.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Okay, I just posted it.

CHAIR GREENE: Okay. Sara is working on this as we speak.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Chair, with regard to what you said before the edit that Commissioner Cacari Stone mentioned my understanding is that some of those are on private land, so I guess I just want to know if that's necessary for

wordsmithing to recognize or it may be beyond scope. I'm obviously in favor of conservation that's not the issue. It's more are we – I'm not sure I personally have a handle on like the checkerboard of ownership of land in that area which is part of the issue with this whole region at least from a conservation standpoint.

I guess I wonder how we would finesse that.

CHAIR GREENE: That's part of the reason why this should have a 30, 60 or 90 day study period.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Yeah.

CHAIR GREENE: This is a big complex issue both with land issues and a lot of different aspects to this. This feels inappropriate to jam it through.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: I think we just have to abdicate in favor of the 10- mile buffer zone. That covers private lands, Navajo lands, and any other land that's out there for now. In the future I think we can lobby for making that all part of a national park or monument.

CHAIR GREENE: We'll get there soon. Sara, are we ready? Yes? Do we post it visually for everybody to read? Perfect. Thank you.

So the first edit is up at the top for the Pueblo Nations of New Mexico, the Diné people living in on the Navajo Nation and transmigrating urban Diné residents of Santa Fe County and the affiliated tribal communities, Chaco Canyon is a living spiritual homeland, not an archeological remnant. That reads well to me.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Agreed.

CHAIR GREENE: The other paragraph towards the end is going to be the federal government bears legal and moral obligations that long predate this proposal and must govern this decision. The Snyder Act of 1921 establishes the federal government's foundational duty to provide for the general support of and protection of indigenous peoples and their interests, a duty of trust that has never been extinguished. That trust, responsibility affirmed and deepened through more than a century of federal law, obligates the government to act as a genuine steward of tribal welfare, not merely a procedural administrator. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 and the National Historic Preservation Act and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples endorsed by the United States further affirm indigenous people's rights to access sacred sites, receive meaningful government-to-government consultation and protect their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: I'd say to that, Yah-ta-hey. Absolutely.

CHAIR GREENE: Rachel, does this pass legal muster?

RACHEL BROWN (Deputy County Attorney): Mr. Chair, Commissioners, if you're asking whether you can make amendments prior to your motion, there is no problem with the amendments.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. Great. I will make a motion to approve the letter as amended here. And would appreciate a second.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Second.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I'll second.

CHAIR GREENE: We got two seconds. We got a second from Commissioner Bustamante and a close second from Commissioner Johnson.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: He co-sponsored.

CHAIR GREENE: Right on and Commissioner Cacari Stone co-edited so we're all together on this. Thank you very much. We've got a motion from Commissioner Greene, myself and a second from Commissioner Johnson. Thank you for Commissioner Bustamante for letting him do that. And can I get a roll call?

The motion passed by unanimous [5-0] roll call vote as follows:

Commissioner Bustamante	Aye
Commissioner Cacari Stone	Aye
Commissioner Hughes	Aye
Commissioner Johnson	Aye
Chair Greene	Aye

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. Thank you very much. We have a letter we will sign this. I don't know how we're going to get signatures from everybody before we send this out there, but it is approved by the full Board of the County Commission.

Thank you very much for convening on such short notice.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Chair.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes, ma'am.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Chair, are we allowed to share electronic signatures with Sara?

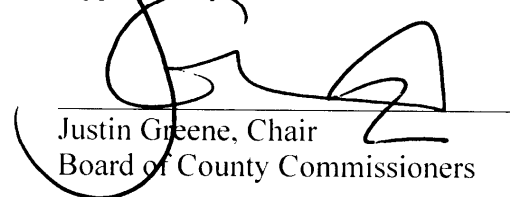
MANAGER SHAFFER: We'll coordinate. Thank you, chair and Commissioners. And we may well use Adobe DocuSign just so that we have that secure record, but we'll make sure that we get through appropriate means valid signatures from all the Commissioners. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you for convening on such short notice everybody.

3. Concluding Business
A. Adjournment

Upon motion to adjourn by Commissioner Johnson and second by Commissioner Cacari Stone and with no further business to come before this body, Chair Greene declared this meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Approved by:


Justin Greene, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST TO:

