

**SANTA FE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 100

**A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE RESCISSION OF THE ROADLESS AREA
CONSERVATION RULE, SUPPORTING THE PERMANENT PROTECTION OF THE
PECOS WATERSHED, AND URGING CONGRESS TO PASS THE PECOS
WATERSHED PROTECTION ACT**

WHEREAS, the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule protects approximately 58 million acres of National Forest “inventoried roadless areas” across the United States, including critical headwaters of the Pecos River, Rio Mora, and Rio Grande in the Santa Fe National Forest and Carson National Forest surrounding the Pecos Wilderness; and

WHEREAS, on June 23, 2025, the United States Department of Agriculture announced a proposal to rescind the Roadless Area Conservation Rule nationwide, eliminating a key conservation safeguard for New Mexico forests and watersheds; and

WHEREAS, approximately 108,000 acres of inventoried roadless area surrounding the Pecos Wilderness are now at risk due to the proposed rescission of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, threatening irreplaceable headwaters that supply clean water to millions of people; and

WHEREAS, there are over 44,000 acres of inventoried roadless area in the upper Pecos River Watershed that provide critical water resources to communities from San Miguel County all the way to Texas for municipal, domestic, and agricultural uses, including drinking water for over 180,000 people, and supply clean water to numerous ancient and agriculturally and culturally significant acequia systems; and

WHEREAS, the greater Pecos Valley region has been the center of a thriving culture for thousands of years and holds deep cultural significance to the Pueblos of New Mexico, including Jemez and Tesuque Pueblos, whose spiritual and cultural traditions remain inseparable from the health of the Pecos River; and

WHEREAS, for centuries, the greater Pecos River Valley has been home to traditional Hispanic communities and land grant mercedes, where acequia-based agriculture, dependent on clean water originating in the Pecos River headwaters, has thrived and continues to define community identity and resilience; and

WHEREAS, the Pecos Valley houses archeological, sacred, and historic resources, still valued and used for traditional practices by descendants of those who settled here, and represents a living cultural landscape that deserves permanent protection; and

WHEREAS, many residents and visitors depend on the inventoried roadless areas in the headwaters of the Pecos River Watershed for recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, mountain biking, and hiking, which sustain both the local economy and the outdoor heritage of Northern New Mexico; and

SFC CLERK RECORDED 10/03/2025

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed within the Santa Fe National Forest contains 19,218 acres of inventoried roadless area and provides 40 percent of the City of Santa Fe's municipal water supply, demonstrating the critical role that roadless areas play in regional water security; and

WHEREAS, fifty-five acequias and traditional irrigation systems, as of 2021, depend upon reliable and uncontaminated flows from the Pecos River headwaters to sustain local food production, cultural lifeways, and agricultural livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, roadless protections safeguard water quality, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, and outdoor recreation by prohibiting most new road construction and commercial timber harvest, while still allowing reasonable access for private property, wood gathering, and valid existing mineral rights, as well as forest restoration and thinning projects to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire; and

WHEREAS, removing roadless protections increases the risk of new mining access roads, exploration, commercial logging, and industrial development in fragile headwaters that sustain water, culture, economy, and biodiversity, threatening an area still recovering from the devastating impacts of historic mining in the region, including the Terrero Mine spill of 1991; and

WHEREAS, the Upper Pecos Watershed Association, New Mexico Wild, local governments, and partner organizations have long called for permanent protection of the watershed through the proposed Pecos Watershed Protection Act, which would withdraw approximately 164,000 acres from new mineral development.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners hereby:

1. Opposes the rescission of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule and affirms its strong support for the permanent protection of the Pecos Watershed.
2. Urges Congress to pass the Pecos Watershed Protection Act, ensuring the long-term protection of water, culture, recreation, and livelihoods in the Pecos Valley.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Manager is directed to forward this Resolution to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, New Mexico's Senators and Representatives in Congress, the Governor of New Mexico, the New Mexico State Land Commissioner, and other elected officials representing political subdivisions wholly or partially within the boundaries of Santa Fe County.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED ON THIS 30TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2025.

**SANTA FE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

By: _____

Camilla Bustamante, Chair

ATTEST:



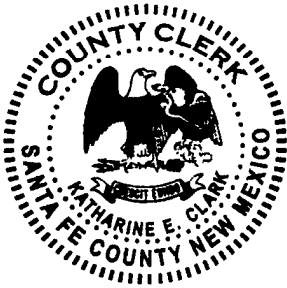
Katharine E. Clark
Santa Fe County Clerk

Date: 10/02/2025

Approved as to form:

 for

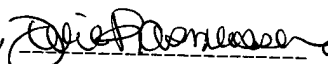
Walker Boyd
Santa Fe County Attorney



COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

BCC RESOLUTIONS
PAGES: 3

I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 3RD Day Of October, 2025 at 10:07:41 AM
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # **2068518**
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Katharine E. Clark
Deputy  County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM



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