SANTA FE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 124

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COUNTY MANAGER OF SANTA FE COUNTY TO PERFORM A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A PUBLICLY OWNED ELECTRIC UTILITY

WHEREAS, our nation's top scientists released the Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA) in November 2018, and their key message on Energy for the Southwest region stated: "[t]he ability of hydropower and fossil fuel electricity generation to meet growing energy use in the Southwest is decreasing as a result of drought and rising temperatures. Many renewable energy sources offer increased electricity reliability, lower water intensity of energy generation, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and new economic opportunities"; and

WHEREAS, producing solar and wind energy uses considerably fewer water resources than other forms of energy; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe County ("County") Board of County Commissioners ("Board") adopted Resolution 2013-7, which established sustainable resource management principles and directed staff to "lead by example" with respect to implementing cost-effective waste reduction, recycling, and clean energy strategies in County operations; and

WHEREAS, the Board passed Resolution No. 2017-68, which adopted and supported the goals set in the Paris Agreement and expressed the Board's intention to support greenhouse gas emission reduction within the County and the community; and

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2021, the Board a ratified the County's commitment to climate action by approving participation in the Local Governments for Sustainability (known as ICLEI) Race to Zero Program and adopting the Race to Pledge Zero; and

WHEREAS, the Board adopted Resolution 2023-074, initiating a Countywide Climate Action Plan Phase 1 to increase energy efficiency and resiliency, including through renewable energy infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, renewable energy and storage are among the cleanest sources of energy with which New Mexican residences and businesses can power its establishments to achieve better air quality and reduce greenhouse gas pollution; and

WHEREAS, many state and local governments in New Mexico, including the County, have already begun reducing their greenhouse gas emissions through implementing energy efficiency, waste reduction, recycling, water conservation, fleet efficiency, and renewable energy production in County facilities and operations; and

WHEREAS, the Board has the authority to provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity and improve the morals, order, comfort and convenience of the County or its residents; and

WHEREAS, the provision of electric energy to the residents of the County is an essential part of what residents depend upon for their well-being; and

WHEREAS, locally generated and managed energy provides resilience over reliance on the large-scale grid system; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico law authorizes municipalities and counties to acquire, operate, and maintain an electric utility for the generation and distribution of electricity; and

WHEREAS, extreme and unpredictable weather patterns resulting from climate change now urgently require the use of energy from non-fossil fuel sources; and

WHEREAS, the costs of solar and wind power have dropped significantly, and these lowered costs are passed on to power users through decreased rates; and

WHEREAS, the generation of local solar energy plus storage increases resilience while supporting public safety and community health; and

WHEREAS, given the cost of living in the County continues to rise, disproportionately impacting residents with low and fixed incomes, particularly seniors, solar energy will provide a more affordable energy source; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the County to collect the revenues generated by the sale of electricity within the County to promote local prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the County already has 28 solar facilities powering its buildings and resources, producing over 3 million kWh of solar energy annually; and

WHEREAS, the County already operates a water utility that serves 4,334 customers, generates more than $9 million in revenue per year, and fulfills County sustainability goals through water conservation measures; and

WHEREAS, the County partnered with Santa Fe Community College in 2014 to develop a campus micro-grid and solar education and training, that provides island-able solar energy and battery storage for the college; and

WHEREAS, the retention of local control of its energy resources is of the highest importance and in the best interest of energy resilience and health of our community; and

WHEREAS, the County ownership of electricity infrastructure on new developments will ensure a just and imminent transition to renewable energy including the restructuring of the power grid and energy markets to best serve community values and interests; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 2,000 publicly owned electric utilities in the USA, and several in the state of New Mexico, which successfully provide energy to their residents at lower costs than their alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the County actively develops energy-intensive facilities that may be suitable for a solar electric micro-grid pilot project, such as resiliency hub facilities or at public housing facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners hereby initiates a sustainable energy utility project to be placed on present or

future county property and that the County Manager shall begin to investigate the feasibility of implementing this project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following be evaluated:

1. The benefits that may accrue to the residents of the County with review and impact to respective stakeholders.
2. The costs involved in the creation of a publicly owned sustainable electric energy utilities.
3. The different options and scales available for the County to create or a publicly owned sustainable energy utilities or variations thereof.
4. Previous studies and models both successful and unsuccessful to establish public electrical energy utilities in New Mexico.
5. A phase 1 wherein the consultant conduct a preliminary assessment of legal, technical, community interest and feedback, and financial viability to be completed within 90 days of procurement; a phase 2 feasibility study assessing, i.e., independent consultant, load modeling, valuation pathways, legal/regulatory analysis, public engagement through workshops, study groups.
6. Written reports and presentations after each phase to BCC and the public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that County staff will:

1. Procure the services of a contractor to undertake the feasibility study described in this Resolution.
2. In evaluating the qualifications of potential contractors for the feasibility study described in this Resolution, the County shall give weight to vendors who: (a) have experience working with local, rural, and Tribal governments on sustainable utility development; and (b) demonstrate an understanding of the unique context of New Mexico and the Southwestern United States.
3. The feasibility study described in this Resolution shall be completed within 365 days of the adoption of this Resolution.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED ON THIS 10th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2025.

SANTA FE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By: _____
Camilla Bustamante, Chair

ATTEST:

_____ Date: 11/11/25
Katharine E. Clark
Santa Fe County Clerk

SFC CLERK RECORDED 11/12/2025

Approved as to form:

Walker Boyd
Santa Fe County Attorney

COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

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I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for Record On The 12TH Day Of November, 2025 at 03:01:17 PM And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 2071273 Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

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

SFC CLERK RECORDED 11/12/2025