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HOUSE MEMORIAL 84

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

INTRODUCED BY

Joseph L. Sanchez

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER FOR THE FUTURE OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN TAOS COUNTY AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND ACTION PLAN ENABLING THE DIVESTMENT OF FORMER QUESTA MINE WATER RIGHTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

WHEREAS, the former Questa mine possesses adjudicated water rights; and

WHEREAS, the former Questa mine permanently ceased mining operations in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the communities of Taos county need access to water rights for their economic development and poverty reduction efforts; and

WHEREAS, the Questa economic development fund identified water resources as a key component of economic transition,

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1 diversification and poverty reduction in its 2015 economic  
2 development plan; and

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

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

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

13 WHEREAS, the office of the state engineer has the  
14 authority to work in partnership with the Questa economic  
15 development fund and the former Questa mine to develop a  
16 stakeholder engagement and action plan that supports continued  
17 environmental remediation and reclamation of the former mine  
18 site while enabling the former mine to concurrently divest of  
19 water rights for the benefit of local communities;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
21 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the importance  
22 of wise water management and administration to promote economic  
23 development and poverty reduction in rural communities be  
24 affirmed, while noting that a lack of capacity and resources in  
25 state agencies may have hampered their ability to fulfill the

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1 agencies' potential to support these efforts; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the development of the  
3 stakeholder engagement and action plan that supports  
4 environmental remediation and reclamation of the former mine  
5 site while concurrently enabling the divestment of former  
6 Questa mine water rights for the benefit of local communities  
7 be deemed beneficial; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the stakeholder engagement and  
9 action plan be a collaborative partnership between the state  
10 engineer and representatives of the former Questa mine and the  
11 Questa economic development fund; and

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