

SENATE MEMORIAL 14

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

INTRODUCED BY

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This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

A MEMORIAL

AFFIRMING THE STATE'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING AND PRESERVING MOUNT TAYLOR AS A TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTY AND OPPOSING URANIUM MINING PROJECTS THAT THREATEN MOUNT TAYLOR'S CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY.

WHEREAS, Mount Taylor, known to indigenous people by several traditional names, stands as a sacred landmark central to the spiritual, cultural and historical identity of the

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region's Indian nations, tribes and pueblos; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, following significant advocacy by the Pueblos of Acoma, Laguna and Zuni, the Hopi Tribe and the Navajo Nation, Mount Taylor was formally nominated and designated as a traditional cultural property on the New Mexico register of cultural properties; and

WHEREAS, the nomination of Mount Taylor as a traditional cultural property recognized its profound cultural significance, including its role in origin stories, traditional practices and ceremonies and as a place of prayer and pilgrimage for indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, the supreme court, in a landmark 2014 decision, affirmed the validity of Mount Taylor's traditional cultural property designation, reinforcing the importance of preserving the mountain as a monument for future generations; and

WHEREAS, proposed uranium mining projects pose significant threats to Mount Taylor and the surrounding environment by physically degrading the landscape and cultural sites with destructive mining operations; and

WHEREAS, proposed uranium mining may deplete and contaminate the San Andres-Glorieta aquifer and related aquifers and springs, which serve as primary water sources for the Pueblos of Acoma and Laguna and the surrounding communities, posing significant risks to water security and public health; and

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WHEREAS, uranium mining operations create environmental hazards through the transport and storage of uranium ore, increasing the risk of contamination of land, air and water resources and exacerbating the health threats already faced by Indian and non-Indian communities alike; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing legacy of uranium mining in New Mexico has resulted in long-term environmental contamination, such as poisoned aquifers and negative health impacts on Indian nations, tribes and pueblos and local communities, highlighting the need for stronger ecological protections for Mount Taylor and all of the state's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the protection of this sacred mountain is essential for the continuation of traditional practices and ceremonies and the preservation of cultural identity of Indian nations, tribes and pueblos;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the senate affirm its commitment to protecting Mount Taylor and oppose any uranium mining projects that threaten its traditional cultural property designation, environmental integrity and sacred status; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate urge federal and state agencies, including the United States forest service and the mining and minerals division of the energy, minerals and natural resources department, to deny permits or authorizations for uranium mining projects within the Mount Taylor traditional

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cultural property boundaries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate call upon the United States congress to reform the federal General Mining Act of 1872 to prioritize the protection of sacred cultural sites and to require meaningful tribal consultation in decisions that impact tribal resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the United States secretary of the interior, the United States secretary of agriculture, the New Mexico congressional delegation, the governor, the commissioner of public lands, the department of environment SRC→and←SRC SRC→,←SRC the energy, minerals and natural resources department SRC→, the Cibola county board of county commissioners, the city of Grants and the village of Milan←SRC .