

Supporting Quotes for the Chama Basin Watershed Protection Act

"We have tended this watershed from time of memorial for several generations and Acequia farmers, Tribal members, ranchers, and families have used this water for life. We are not in favor of this mining operation or any type of destruction of our watershed. We respectfully request Government to Government consultation before any of the land and water is disturbance." – **James Naranjo, Governor of the Pueblo of Santa Clara**

"The Rio Chama Watershed is one of New Mexico's most treasured landscapes and an essential source of clean water for our communities, acequias, agriculture, wildlife, and future generations. Protecting this watershed from uranium exploration and mining is a critical step toward safeguarding our natural resources and honoring the voices of local communities and Tribal Nations who have long advocated for its protection. I commend Senator Luján, Senator Heinrich and Representative Leger Fernández for their leadership in advancing the Chama Basin Watershed Protection Act and look forward to working together to ensure this vital watershed remains protected for generations to come." – **Leo Jaramillo, New Mexico State Senate, District 5**

"I want to thank Senator Luján and the delegation for their continuous efforts to protect this land that is so important to Northern New Mexicans. There's a time and place for mining, and this is not one of them." – **Joseph L. Sanchez, New Mexico State Representative, House District 40**

"The Rio Chama Watershed serves as a critical water supply for the entire State of New Mexico. It also provides high value wildlife and fisheries habitat, affords world class recreational opportunities, and is held sacred by indigenous communities and Spanish Land Grant heirs who have maintained farming and ranching traditions in this watershed for millennia. I fully endorse withdrawing federal lands within the Rio Chama Watershed from all forms of location, entry, and patent under the mining laws." – **Susan Herrera, New Mexico State Representative, House District 41**

"I believe it is important to keep our ecosystem healthy. The risks posed by any form of mining within the Chama Watershed outweigh any perceived benefit. We have already seen the heavy toll that some communities in New Mexico associated with past uranium extraction have already paid. As an example, consider the Grants, NM community. Legacy uranium extraction issues there have been studied by the US Environmental Protection Agency and other organizations. We cannot risk our local communities with this proposed activity. Uranium mining is especially risky. I support the "Chama Basin Watershed Protection Act". – **Moises Morales, Chairman, Rio Arriba County Commission**

"The Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District(UCSWCD) has a broad mandate to assist, promote and protect public lands and natural resources, soil, water and wildlife resources in order to stabilize the ranching and agricultural industry and to provide for the public safety, health and welfare of the citizens of the Chama Basin. The

UCSWCD supports the "Chama Basin Watershed Protection Act" in order to protect and enhance the customs and cultures, economy and assure the well-being of residents of the UCSWCD and to provide for community stability." – **Max D Martinez, Vice Chair, Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District**

"The Upper Chama watershed is a place of extraordinary national value — a living cultural landscape cared for by tribal nations, acequia communities, land grants, and families whose ties to this land stretch back centuries. Senator Ben Ray Luján's legislation to withdraw this watershed from all forms of location, entry, and patent under the mining laws is a powerful affirmation that some places must remain protected forever. His leadership ensures that no future mineral claims or industrial development can threaten the water, wildlife, and cultural heritage that define northern New Mexico. This is not just a regional issue — it is a national commitment to safeguarding one of America's most irreplaceable watersheds." – **Tirzio TJ Lopez, Supervisor, Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District and New Mexico State Game Commissioner**

"The Chama Basin Watershed Protection Act is an important piece of legislation that will protect and preserve critical watersheds and traditional use areas sacred to the surrounding communities and vital to all New Mexicans downstream." – **Juan Sánchez, Chair, New Mexico Land Grant Council**

"The support and passage of this piece of legislation is extremely necessary. La Merced de Los Pueblos de Tierra Amarilla is in full support of this effort." – **Melvyn Apodaca, President, Tierra Amarilla Land Grant**

"Land grants are deeply connected to our environment, our culture, and our future. Protecting our land and precious water sources from the risks of uranium drilling is absolutely critical for the health of our community. We remain firmly committed to safeguarding our natural resources, preserving our clean water, and ensuring that our environment is protected for generations to come." – **Monica Rodriguez, Vice President/Treasurer, San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant/Merced**

"On behalf of the Abiquiu Land Grant, I ask that the proposed Uranium Mining project on Forest Service land in Canjillon, New Mexico not be considered or approved. Abiquiu, New Mexico is downwind and down river of Canjillon. We do not deserve to breathe contaminants such as Radon gas or contaminated dust particles caused by uranium mining. Water is in short supply in New Mexico. We cannot afford to pollute and contaminate our waters that we depend on for survival." – **Victoria Garcia, President, Merced del Pueblo Abiquiu, aka Abiquiu Land Grant**

"The Rio Chama is a vital watershed sustaining acequias and traditional communities with a 500-year history. As Chair of the New Mexico Acequia Commission, I stand in full support for the Rio Chama Watershed Protection Act. We must protect this region from future development that is inconsistent with our culture, heritage, and community needs." – **Mary Mascarenas, Chairwoman, New Mexico Acequia Commission**

"Our way of life as land-based people is threatened by potential mining operations. We support legislation that would protect the sacred landscape of the Rio Chama water from mining exploration and extraction. We have a responsibility to do everything in our power to protect the land and water for our agricultural traditions, community health, future generations." – **Paula Garcia, Executive Director, New Mexico Acequia Association**

"The Rio Chama Basin is one of New Mexico's most treasured landscapes and a lifeline for downstream communities, farms, and wildlife. New Mexicans have made it clear that uranium mining has no place in this culturally significant landscape. The Chama Basin Watershed Protection Act would permanently withdraw federal lands in the watershed from mineral entry, ensuring this irreplaceable place is never put at risk from uranium exploration and mining. New Mexico Wild is grateful to Senator Luján, Senator Heinrich and Representative Leger Fernández for standing with the communities who have worked tirelessly to protect this special place." – **Garrett VeneKlasen, Northern Conservation Director, New Mexico Wild**

"The Rio Chama is the lifeblood of northern New Mexico. The entire Ghost Ranch community, including our staff, guests, residents, volunteers, and partners, is grateful for this watershed. We simply wouldn't be here without it. Uranium exploration puts all of that at risk for a short-term return that leaves nothing behind but the cleanup. We are grateful to Senator Luján, Senator Heinrich and Representative Leger Fernández for recognizing that some places are worth protecting permanently. Ghost Ranch firmly supports this legislation." – **David Evans, CEO, Ghost Ranch**

"Uncontaminated water is vital to agriculture throughout the Chama Basin and beyond. It is important to protect our water sources from uranium contamination because the impacts can last for decades. For that reason, we support limiting uranium mining in sensitive ecosystems like the Chama Basin." – **Cathy Day, Executive Director, New Mexico Farm to Table**