



**Stephanie Garcia
Richard
COMMISSIONER**

*State of New Mexico
Commissioner of Public Lands*

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May 28, 2021

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
Mining and Minerals Division
1220 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

SENT VIA U.S. MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MAIL TO EMNRD.MMD2@STATE.NM.US

Dear New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division,

I am writing to submit my comments in opposition to the application submitted by Comexico, LLC to conduct exploratory drilling in Tererro, New Mexico, a small community that is situated in the heart of Pecos Canyon and the Pecos watershed. I've heard from New Mexicans who are also deeply concerned about this proposed mining application, and I hope you will consider our concerns and deny this application.

The proposed mining site in Tererro is still recovering from a legacy of mining dating back to the 1880s, and it was a Superfund site as recently as the 1990s when contaminated runoff killed more than 90,000 trout. New Mexico taxpayers have spent millions of dollars to remediate this site, which is an effort and a significant expense that remains ongoing. We don't need more damage to this fragile ecosystem, and we shouldn't leave taxpayers on the hook for paying for the consequences of further damage.

The Pecos River is a vital watershed that provides much-needed water to wildlife and rural communities. New Mexico remains in a frightening drought, and we cannot afford to put any of our precious water sources at greater risk than they already are.

Additionally, this project requires a comprehensive environmental review, which should be considered as a part of this application. The Endangered Species Act requires biological assessments and consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service when projects could adversely impact threatened and endangered species. The proposed project would occur within a protected area that includes the Mexican Spotted Owl, as well as the federally listed rare flowering plant, the Holy Ghost Ipomopsis. No mining activity should be permitted in this area without clear compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

It's worth mentioning that both San Miguel and Santa Fe counties have adopted hard-rock mining ordinances which further signal the significant public opposition to these activities in the Pecos Canyon. In addition to the numerous environmental considerations I've described, it's also worth noting that the area boasts significant outdoor recreation which could be hindered by future mining in this area, impacting local economies that depend on this tourism to thrive.

Thank you for considering my comments. Please deny Comexico, LLC's application to drill in the Pecos Canyon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie Garcia Richard
Commissioner of Public Lands

CC: Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
Jennifer Swiader, Acting Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor