

RESOLUTION R-21-047

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 2021-052 SETTING 30 x 30 LAND PRESERVATION GOAL

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., issued Executive Order 14008 entitled *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (86 Fed. Reg. 7,619); and

WHEREAS, in Section 216 of Executive Order 14008, President Biden directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture and other senior officials, to develop a program to conserve at least 30 percent of the lands and waters in the United States by 2030, which is called the "30 x 30" program; and

WHEREAS, on May 20, 2021 at its regularly scheduled meeting of the Chaves County Board of Commissioners adopted Resolution R-21-023 opposing the Federal 30 x 30 program and its objective of permanently preserving 30 percent of the Nation's lands in their natural state by 2030, or any similar program that will set aside and prevent the productive use of millions of acres of our national, state and county lands; and

WHEREAS, on August 25, 2021, the Governor of the State of New Mexico issued Executive Order Number 2021-052 entitled *Protecting New Mexico Lands, Watersheds, Wildlife and Natural Heritage* with the stated purpose of setting "the goal of having at least 30 percent (30%) of all lands in New Mexico conserved by 2030, with an additional twenty percent (20%) designated as climate stabilization areas"; and

WHEREAS, the Chaves County Board of Commissioners acknowledges that while the goal of protecting New Mexico lands, watersheds, wildlife, and natural heritage are commendable, Executive Order 2021-052 lacks detail as to the means and effectiveness of setting aside lands in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Chaves County Board of Commissioners opposes the use of global climate change as an excuse to set aside large tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Number 2021-052 fails to state which lands are to be set aside, leading to speculation as to the potential impact on State trust lands that generate significant revenue for the State, its local governments, its educational institutions, its infrastructure and the impact on private ownership of lands; and

WHEREAS, many of Chaves County's businesses and its citizens are involved in, or otherwise depend, on industries that utilize both public and private lands and their resources, including the oil and gas industry, livestock grazing, mining and mineral development, recreational industries, hunting and other outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Number 2021-052 fails to recognize that the economy of the State of New Mexico is dependent on the use of its lands. It further fails to recognize that that the New Mexico State Land Office manages some 9 million surface acres and 12.7 million subsurface acres of trust lands that in 2020 generated a revenue of over 1 billion dollars; and

WHEREAS, the setting aside of land as proposed would substantially reduce revenues available for state and local governments, education, and infrastructure and would significantly impact the already tenuous position of the New Mexico economy; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Number 2021-052 is vague and ambiguous in detail of how such designated lands within New Mexico will be implemented and lacks any scientific evidence of how such designation is necessary or effective for securing the future of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order Number 2021-052, if implemented, will conflict with the plans, policies and programs of Chaves County as specified in Chaves County's Comprehensive Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Chaves County, New Mexico, as follows:

1. The Board opposes the Governor's Executive Order Number 2021-052 as it is deficient in detail and lacks any scientific basis for its solution to protect New Mexico Lands, Watersheds, Wildlife and Natural Heritage by setting aside thirty percent of all lands in New Mexico with an additional twenty percent set aside as climate stabilization areas.
2. The Board further opposes the designation of lands, in Chaves County as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land, thereby restricting public access to such lands and preventing the development and productive use of the resources on or within such lands.
3. The Board supports the continued private ownership of land in the County, recognizing the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber.
4. The Board recognizes and supports the State of New Mexico's water rights system, and other state laws and programs governing water rights and water use and opposes any federal designation of waters and watercourses within the County that would impair or restrict water diversions and uses authorized under New Mexico law.
5. The Board supports reasonable national, regional, and global greenhouse gas emissions policies and goals that are comprehensive, practical, cost-effective, and do not unnecessarily single out specific industries or activities but opposes the use of global climate change as an excuse to set aside large tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives.
6. The Board also maintains that any lands or other rights that are acquired to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives should be acquired only from willing landowners and for the payment full and fair market value for all rights and interests acquired, and not through regulatory compulsion, and only after analyzing and considering the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Chaves County, its businesses, and its citizens.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Chaves County Commissioners shall send a copy of this resolution to the State of New Mexico and any other relevant State agencies.

DONE THIS 16th day of September 2021, at Roswell, Chaves County, New Mexico.

BOARD OF CHAVES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

William E. Cavin, Chairman

Jeff Bilberry, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:

Dara Dana, Member

T. Calder Ezzell Jr, Member

Cindy Fuller
County Clerk

Richard Taylor, Member