

**VILLAGE OF PECOS, NEW MEXICO
RESOLUTION NO. 2023-006**

**IN SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROTECTION OF THE UPPER PECOS RIVER WATERSHED
THROUGH THE WITHDRAWAL OF MINERAL RIGHTS**

WHEREAS, the Village of Pecos is located along, and has grown to its present state, in large part due to its geographical situation along the Pecos River, which provides critical water resources to the community;

WHEREAS, clean water is essential for the health and wellbeing of Village residents, who have used the river for hundreds of years; and

WHEREAS, agriculture in the area depends on clean water carried by acequias to irrigate crops; and

WHEREAS, many residents and visitors depend on the Pecos River Watershed for recreational activities such as fishing, camping, swimming and hiking; and in 2019 the New Mexico State Legislature passed SB 280, which appropriated \$2,100,000 to fund improvements to visitor services and administrative facilities for the Pecos Canyon State Park; and

WHEREAS, the Upper Pecos River watershed provides fresh water downstream for hundreds of miles, contributing to fish and wildlife habitat and supporting both a cold-water fishery and the Lisboa Springs Fish Hatchery; and

WHEREAS, previous mining activities at the Tererro mine and mill site caused toxic waste to enter the Pecos River, and the contaminated runoff killed more than 90,000 trout and polluted community drinking water supplies; and

WHEREAS, the rehabilitation of the watershed required significant reclamation efforts by the State of New Mexico, the Environmental Protection Agency and others, and the toxic metal cleanup has cost New Mexico taxpayers \$28 million; and

WHEREAS, in August 2022 the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission designated 180 stream miles and over 40 acres of wetlands within the Upper Pecos River watershed as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRWs), which reflects that high-water quality has been reestablished in these outstanding waters and prohibits any future degradation or pollution of these waters; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, Comexico LLC, a Colorado subsidiary of an Australian mining company New World Resources Ltd. (formerly New World Cobalt Ltd.), applied with the Santa Fe National Forest and the New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division to conduct exploratory drilling in the Jones Hill area near Tererro, NM to look for gold, copper, zinc, lead, and silver; and the company's website reflects that the company has acquired hundreds of mining claims that cover 4300 acres in the surrounding forest; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, in response to the mining threat from Comexico, LLC, U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan and U.S. Representatives Teresa Leger Fernández and Melanie Stansbury introduced the "Pecos Watershed Protection Act," a bill to legislatively withdraw approximately 166,600 acres of federal lands within the Upper Pecos River watershed from future mineral entry; and

WHEREAS, on November 2, 2021, these congressional leaders sent a letter to Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland, requesting that the Department of Interior begin the process to administratively withdraw federal minerals within the Upper Pecos River watershed from future mineral development, thereby providing interim protection until permanent protection can be secured legislatively; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2022, the Village of Pecos approved Resolution Number 2022-001 in support of the "Pecos Watershed Protection Act" (Bill S.182) and resolving that the Village will join with other interested parties in supporting the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) grants the Secretary of the Department of Interior the authority to approve the administrative withdrawal of federal public land from future hard rock mining, subject to valid existing rights, for a period of up to 20 years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE VILLAGE OF PECOS THAT the Village of Pecos supports the administrative withdrawal of mineral rights on federal public lands within the Upper Pecos River watershed, subject to valid existing rights, for a period of up to 20 years or until permanent protection is secured through legislation.

MOVED, SECONDED AND ADOPTED this 10th day of May, 2023.

ATTEST:



 Anna M Vigil, Village Clerk



 Will Crespin, Interim Treasurer

ABSENT

 Telesfor A. Benavidez, Mayor




 Ralph Lopez, Mayor Pro Tem



 Herman Gallegos, Trustee



 Brian Sandoval, Trustee



 Armando Gabaldon, Trustee

MAY 10,

RECORD OF COUNCIL VOTE -- APRIL 13 2023									
	Yes	No	N.V.	Absent		Yes	No	N.V.	Absent
Lopez	✓				Gallegos	✓			
Sandoval	✓				Gabaldon	✓			

N.V. = (Abstain)