THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SANTA FE COUNTY

RESOLUTION NO. 2019 - \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION URGING THE U.S. CONGRESS TO ENACT ‘THE CHACO CULTURAL HERITAGE AREA PROTECTION ACT, S. 1079’ TO WITHDRAW THE FEDERAL LANDS AROUND CHACO CANYON FROM FURTHER MINERAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF CHACO RUINS AND THE GREATER LANDSCAPE SURROUNDING
THE CHACO CULTURE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

**WHEREAS**, U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich and U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Luján and Deb Haaland (“the New Mexico Congressional Delegation”) introduced the “Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act, S. 1079”, a bill to withdraw the federal lands around Chaco Canyon from further mineral development; and

**WHEREAS,** New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands Stephanie Garcia Richard signed Land Office Executive Order 2019-002, placing a moratorium on new oil and gas development on 72,776 acres in the state trust land in a buffer zone around Chaco Canyon; and

**WHEREAS,** the greater Chaco Canyon region was the center of a thriving culture one thousand years ago and holds deep cultural significance to the Native Pueblos of New Mexico and The Navajo Nation; and

**WHEREAS,** the greater Chaco Canyon region houses archeological, sacred and historic resources; and

**WHEREAS,** the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, a unit of the National Park System and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site, is known around the world for its multi-story buildings constructed by the Chacoan people that are still standing, and as a nerve center of a culture that spread throughout and dominated the Four Corners area during the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries; and

**WHEREAS,** the landscape around the Chaco Culture National Historical Park includes hundreds of internationally and nationally significant cultural resources, including prehistoric roads, communities and shrines; and

**WHEREAS,** for over 110 years, the Federal Government has recognized the importance of the area in which the Chacoan people lived and has acted to protect historic and sacred sites in the area, including Chaco Canyon, which was designated as a National Monument in 1907 and as the Chaco Culture National Historical Park in 1980, and the Aztec Ruins, which was designated as a National Monument in 1923, and finally, the 39 Chaco Culture Archeological Protection Sites designated in 1995; and

**WHEREAS,** extensive natural gas development has occurred in the Greater Chaco region that affect the health, safety, economies, and quality of life of local communities; and

**WHEREAS,** renewed interest in oil exploration and production within the Mancos/Gallup Shale play has increased the potential for significant impacts on resources and visitor experiences at the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, as well as additional impacts on local communities in the Greater Chaco region including The Navajo Nation and Pueblos; and

**WHEREAS,** a mineral withdrawal in the landscape around the Chaco Culture National Historical Park would prevent leasing and development in the immediate area surrounding the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, which would protect resources and visitor experiences at the Chaco Culture National Historical Park; and

**WHEREAS,** additional studies and protective measures should be undertaken to address health, safety, and environmental impacts on communities and interests of Pueblos and in the Navajo Nation and the Jicarilla Apache Tribe of the Greater Chaco landscape; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners (Board) is committed to protecting public and sacred lands from exploitation by energy development initiatives; and

**WHEREAS,** the Board recognizes that the eight Pueblos within the boundary of Santa Fe County maintain deep connections and have ancestral ties to Chaco Culture National Historic Park and the southwest region.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Santa Fe County, that:

1. The Board supports S. 1079, the Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act, and urges the United States Congress to adopt this bill.
2. Directs the County Manager to submit copies of this Resolution to the New Mexico Congressional delegation, the Navajo Nation President, The Pueblo of New Mexico and Jicarilla Apache Tribes.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED ON THIS 28th DAY OF MAY, 2019.**

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SANTA FE COUNTY**

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| Anna T. Hamilton, Chair |

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| APPROVED AS TO FORM: |  | ATTESTATION: |
| R. Bruce Frederick, County Attorney  |  | Geraldine Salazar, County Clerk |