

June 28, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary, Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240



EARTHKEEPERS360



Interfaith Power & Light
New Mexico & El Paso Region
www.nm-ipl.com

Dear Secretary Burgum:

As religious and spiritual leaders from across New Mexico, we write to urge you to maintain all existing protections provided by the 20-year administrative withdrawal of federal lands and minerals within the 10-mile buffer surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

Our faith traditions teach us that the earth is a sacred trust, not merely a resource to be consumed. We are called to care for creation, protect places of cultural and spiritual significance, and stand alongside communities whose voices have too often been overlooked. The Greater Chaco landscape embodies these values. It is a living sacred landscape that has been home to Indigenous peoples of the Southwest since time immemorial and remains deeply connected to the spiritual, cultural, and communal life of Tribal Nations today.

The mineral withdrawal was the result of decades of collaborative work among Tribal Nations, elected officials, Indigenous and frontline organizations, local communities, and many other stakeholders. It represents a thoughtful and hard-won effort to balance economic interests with the protection of irreplaceable cultural, spiritual, and environmental resources. We believe this achievement should be upheld rather than dismantled.

We are deeply concerned that the current process to revoke the withdrawal has failed to provide meaningful opportunities for public participation. The initial seven-day scoping period for public comment was scheduled during one of the holiest times of the year for many faith traditions, overlapping with Easter, Passover, and traditional Pueblo observances. Now, the public is being given only fourteen days to review and comment on the draft Environmental Assessment. Such abbreviated timelines do not allow for adequate consultation, thoughtful engagement, or meaningful consideration of the communities most affected by this decision.

Allowing additional oil and gas leasing in the Greater Chaco region would exacerbate already severe cumulative impacts. Communities in the area continue to face concerns related to poor air quality, risks to groundwater, industrialization of culturally significant landscapes, and disproportionate environmental burdens on nearby Indigenous communities. Expanding development threatens not only the health of people and ecosystems but also the integrity of sacred sites and cultural resources that cannot be replaced once damaged.

The withdrawal protects far more than archaeological sites. It safeguards community health, supports sustainable economic development, respects Tribal sovereignty, and honors the cultural and spiritual heritage of Indigenous peoples. Importantly, the withdrawal does not alter existing land ownership and does not affect Tribal allottee rights to develop their lands for oil and gas.

These protections represent a balanced and reasonable approach that recognizes both cultural preservation and property rights.

We are encouraged that the withdrawal is supported by the All Pueblo Council of Governors, representing the 20 Pueblo Nations, and by the National Congress of American Indians, the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the United States. We have been proud to stand in solidarity with the All Pueblo Council of Governors, the National Congress of American Indians, Tribal Nations, frontline communities, and Indigenous leaders who have worked tirelessly to protect this sacred landscape.

As people of faith, we believe that how we treat sacred places reflects our moral character and our responsibility to future generations. We therefore respectfully urge the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management to maintain the Chaco mineral withdrawal and reject efforts to weaken or revoke these essential protections.

Protecting Greater Chaco is an act of stewardship, justice, and respect. It is a commitment to honoring Indigenous sovereignty, preserving cultural heritage, safeguarding public health, and caring for a landscape that holds profound significance for countless people. We ask that you uphold these protections for the benefit of present and future generations.

With Gratitude,

Reverend Andrew Black

EarthKeepers 360 & First Presbyterian
Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Joseph Brophy Toledo

Flower Hill Institute
Jemez Pueblo, NM 87024

Desirée Bernard

Executive Director New Mexico Interfaith
Power and Light
Albuquerque, NM 87125

Rabbi Nahum Ward-Lev

Author: The Liberating Path of the Hebrew
Prophets: Then and Now
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Rev. Clara Sims

Assistant Executive Dir., New Mexico & El
Paso Interfaith Power and Light
Associate Minister, First Congregational
United Church of Christ ABQ

Sister Joan Brown, osf

Franciscan Sister and Co-Founder New
Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
Albuquerque, NM 87125

Nelson Capitan, Ruling Elder
Pueblo of Laguna, Diné
Naschitti, New Mexico 87325

Roshi Joan Halifax
Upaya Zen Center
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Sister Barb O'Connor. OfS
Order of the Franciscan Sisters
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507

Reverend Dr. Harry Eberts
Interim Director, Presbyterian Peace
Fellowship
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Reverend Carolyn Metzler
Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande
Datil, New Mexico 87821

Reverend Madeline Hart-Anderson
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Reverend Dr. Stephen J. Miller
Disciples of Christ (retired)
Albuquerque, NM 87107

The Honorable Bruce D. Black, Deacon
First Presbyterian Church Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Reverend Dr. Robert Woodruff
Second Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Reverend Talitha J. Arnold
United Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Reverend John Guthrie
Presbytery of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506

Reverend Dr. Kenneth Cuthbertson
Presbyterian (PCUSA) (Retired)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Tribal Leader Jon Naranjo
Santa Clara Pueblo/ Hopi and Flower Hill Institute
Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico 87532

Reverend Dr. Holly Beaumont
Interfaith Worker Justice - New Mexico
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Abbot Joel Garner O. Praem
Santa Maria de la Vid Abbey
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87121

Reverend Lynne Hinton
Spiritual Director New Mexico Conference of
Churches
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87125

Member Rozanne Kalsbeek
All Saints Lutheran Church
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144

Reverend James D Brown
Member of Presbytery of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Reverend Elizabeth Graham
Embudo and Emmanuel Presbyterian Churches
Dixon, New Mexico 87553

Elder Bonnie Crispin
New Life Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Sister Marlene Perrotte, rsm
Sisters of Mercy
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Reverend Sue Joiner
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

Reverend Madeline Hart-Anderson
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Reverend Ashley Birk
First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Reverend San Williams

First Presbyterian Church in Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507

Reverend Drew Henry

Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

Reverend Dr. Sarah Tevis Townes

Church of the Good Shepherd, UCC
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87122

Reverend Erica Lea-Simka

Albuquerque Mennonite Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

Reverend Tiffany Curtis

The Open Circle: A Disciples of Christ
Community
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Reverend Seth Finch

Covenant Presbyterian Church (USA)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

Reverend Susan Carroll Gaffney

First Congregational United Church of
Christ
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

Reverend David Whiteley

Santa Fe Presbytery
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120

Reverend Takako Terino

Jemez Springs Community Presbyterian
Church
Jemez Springs, New Mexico 87025

Reverend Tricia Dykers Koenig

Presbyterian Church (USA)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113

Reverend Dr. Jim Hoque (retired)

United Church of Santa Fe
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

Member Charlotte Smith

Baha'i of Albuquerque
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87121

Sister Maria Isabel Galbe

Religious of the Assumption
Chaparral, New Mexico 88081

Reverend H. Blaine Wimberly

Mountainside Methodist
Cedar Crest, New Mexico 87008

Vanna Ortiz, Director of Children's Ministry

Covenant Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113

Reverend Benjamin Larzelere

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Reverend Anita Amstutz

Mennonite Church USA
Taos, New Mexico 87557

Reverend Hannah Scanlon

Menaul School
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Elder Richard Padberg

Embudo Presbyterian Church
Dixon, New Mexico 87527

Rulling Elder Malissa Haslam

First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Reverend Gail Marriner

Unitarian Universalist
Santa Fe, New Mexico 875085

Vestry Member Roger Ludwig

St. Jame Episcopal Church
Taos, New Mexico 87571

Spiritual Director Jeannie Bowman
First Presbyterian Church Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506

Reverend Kristi Koppel
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Dr. Bruce D. Hunn
St. Francis Episcopal Church
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124

Lay Leader Arthur Neudek
First Presbyterian Church Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Lay Leader Marlin Johnson
Sandia Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Reverend Anne Morawski
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

Deacon Jan Krakow
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Reverend Vangie Chavez
Rising Sun Christian Community
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87114

Deacon Bruce R. Goslin
First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Reverend Dewey Johnson
Rio Grande Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Judy Traeger, Lay Leader
St. John XXIII Catholic Community
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Juanita Thorne Connerty, Deacon, Elder & Session Member

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Reverend Carmen Retzlaff
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Leslie Fagre, Council Member
United Church of Christ Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Sister Theresa Louisa Woo Ching
Little Sisters of the Poor
Gallup, New Mexico 87301

Dana Bender, Director of Family Ministry
United Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Jennifer Black, Director of Family Ministry
First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Joanne Lefrak, Director of Experience and Social Impact
Ghost Ranch Education & Retreat Center
Abiquiu, New Mexico 87510

Donna Detweiler, Faith in Action Elder
Albuquerque Mennonite Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

Reverend Patty L. Ebner
First Congregational Albuquerque
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120

Carmichael Dominguez, Hispanic Community Organizer
EarthKeepers360
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507

Betsy Windisch
Westminster Presbyterian Church Gallup
Gallup, New Mexico 87301

Reverend Dr. Frank Yates

Rio Rancho Presbyterian Church
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87111

Ms. Linda Popelish

Morning Light Sangha
Gallup, New Mexico 87305

Tanya Barlow, Conference President

United Women in Faith
Ruidoso, New Mexico 88345

Reverend Dr. Tuck Stibich

Upaya Zen Center
Santa Fe, New Mexico 88502

Reverend James Bristol

Upaya Zen Center
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Reverend Lucas Grubbs

New Mexico Conference of Churches
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Reverend Donna Gianoulis

The Monastery
Silver City, New Mexico 88061

Father Anne

Father Anne Ministries
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Reverend Kristin Schultz

All Saints Lutheran Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120

Reverend William Koenig

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113

Reverend Lee Walters

United Church of Christ
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Reverend David Philips

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) (Retired)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Elder Roger Said

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506

Reverend Virginia Bairby

First Presbyterian Church of Taos
Taos, New Mexico 87571

Ms. Lana Green

St. James Episcopal Church
Taos, New Mexico 87571

Dr. Clayton Dalton

Upaya Zen Center
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Kurt Rager, Director

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry- New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Reverend Dr. Catherine Robinson

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Reverend Tom Ulrich

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) (retired)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87123

Ruling Elder Ellen Powell

Covenant Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113

Idolia Hawkins, Church Green Team Chair

Central United Methodist Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Gale Wasserman, Chair of the Justice Council

Unitarian Universalist Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Reverend Sue Joiner

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Reverend Mike Angell

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Karen Cox, Administrator
Las Placitas Presbyterian Church
Placitas, New Mexico 87043

Elder Mary Bushma
Rio Rancho Presbyterian Church
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144

Reverend Archie Anaya
Episcopal Church
Tererro, New Mexico 87573

Elder Debra Allen-Reid
First United Presbyterian Church
Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701

Elder Cindy Piatt
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Deacon Jim Williams
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506

Dr. Grace Nadell
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Reverend Lawrence Bernard
Franciscan Friars
Roswell, New Mexico 88203

Reverend Dr. James Hogue
United Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87544

Elder James McCarty
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Member Thomas Loyd
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104

**Gayle Boyd, Advocacy and Democracy Justice Team
Chair**

Unitarian Universalist Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Janelle Casaus, Clerk of Session
Cuba Presbyterian Church
Cuba, New Mexico 87013

Kent Reid, Clerk of Session
First United Presbyterian Church
Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701

Deacon Donna Ormerod
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507

Elder Carol Litherland
First United Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas
Rociada, New Mexico 87742

Reverend Sharon Tatum Gray
First United Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas
Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701

Elder Winona Poole
La Mesa Presbyterian
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Deacon Kathleen Watson Nadler
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Reverend Joyce Lieberman
Presbytery of Santa Fe
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Reverend Chris Lieberman
Presbytery of Santa Fe
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Reverend Dr. James Klotz
Presbytery of Santa Fe
Farmington, New Mexico 87401

Member Virginia Myers

St. John XXIII Catholic Community
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

Ruling Elder John Sitler

Covenant Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Elder Michael Jones

Covenant Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120

Melissa Mendonca, Mercy Associate

Sisters of Mercy
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

Member Ann Williams

Our Lady of the Mist Holy Rosary
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

Member Dana Loy

Franciscan Justice Circle
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Sister Rosemarie Goins

Felician Sisters of North America
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124

Member Leslie Fagre

United Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Elder James D. Dillow

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Elder Judith Haines

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Member Mary Gullede

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Dr. David Dennedy-Frank

Santa Fe Ecumenical Conversations Towards Nuclear
Disarmament

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Ruling Elder Justine Locke

Covenant Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

Catechist Patricia AM Duda

St. John XXIII Catholic Community
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Brother Anthony DeCorte OFS

Secular Franciscan Order
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88012

Elder Richard Irish

St. Andrew Presbyterian
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Elder Barbara Sanders

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Elder Maryanne Amos

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506

Elder Bethany Dillow

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Member Paul Powell

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87123

Elder Sharon Eklund

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Principal Antonio Trujillo

St. Joseph Mission School
San Fidel, New Mexico 87049

Reverend Betty Davis

Church of the Good Shepherd
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

Clerk of Session Melissa Mitchell

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Dr. Idolia Hawkins

Central United Methodist Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Elder Mary Loyd

Covenant Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

Deacon Susan Keil Smith

First Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Dr. Martia Glass

First Presbyterian Church
Farmington, New Mexico 87401

Reverend Dr. Fred R. Belk

Presbytery of Santa Fe
Tijeras, New Mexico 87059

Member Judith L. Messal

All Saints Lutheran Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87114

Reverend Sarah Chivington-Buck

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

Reverend Jeremiah Griffin

St. Chad's Episcopal Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87122

Reverend Matt Bridges

St. John's United Methodist Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

Elder George Parr

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507

Elder Helen Weldon

Covenant/ Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

Brother John Sandstrom, FCM

Holy Family American Catholic Church
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Elder Cindy Abel Morris

First Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Reverend Kelly Gregory

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Farmington, New Mexico 87401

Dr. Virginia Hurt Belk

First Presbyterian Church Albuquerque
Tijeras, New Mexico 87059

Sister Nancy Singh, OFS

Secular Franciscan Order
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Member Martha Debelak

All Saints Lutheran Church
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87114

Elder Janice Langdale

Las Placitas Presbyterian Church
Las Placitas, New Mexico 87043

Deacon Mary Norris

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506