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SENATE MEMORIAL 14

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

INTRODUCED BY

Angel M. Charley

A MEMORIAL

AFFIRMING THE STATE'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING AND PRESERVING MOUNT TAYLOR AS A TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTY AND OPPOSING URANIUM MINING PROJECTS THAT THREATEN MOUNT TAYLOR'S CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY.

WHEREAS, Mount Taylor, known to indigenous people by several traditional names, stands as a sacred landmark central to the spiritual, cultural and historical identity of the region's Indian nations, tribes and pueblos; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, following significant advocacy by the Pueblos of Acoma, Laguna and Zuni, the Hopi Tribe and the Navajo Nation, Mount Taylor was formally nominated and designated as a traditional cultural property on the New Mexico register of cultural properties; and

WHEREAS, the nomination of Mount Taylor as a traditional

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1 cultural property recognized its profound cultural
2 significance, including its role in origin stories, traditional
3 practices and ceremonies and as a place of prayer and
4 pilgrimage for indigenous peoples; and

5 WHEREAS, the supreme court, in a landmark 2014 decision,
6 affirmed the validity of Mount Taylor's traditional cultural
7 property designation, reinforcing the importance of preserving
8 the mountain as a monument for future generations; and

9 WHEREAS, proposed uranium mining projects pose significant
10 threats to Mount Taylor and the surrounding environment by
11 physically degrading the landscape and cultural sites with
12 destructive mining operations; and

13 WHEREAS, proposed uranium mining may deplete and
14 contaminate the San Andres-Glorieta aquifer and related
15 aquifers and springs, which serve as primary water sources for
16 the Pueblos of Acoma and Laguna and the surrounding
17 communities, posing significant risks to water security and
18 public health; and

19 WHEREAS, uranium mining operations create environmental
20 hazards through the transport and storage of uranium ore,
21 increasing the risk of contamination of land, air and water
22 resources and exacerbating the health threats already faced by
23 Indian and non-Indian communities alike; and

24 WHEREAS, the ongoing legacy of uranium mining in New
25 Mexico has resulted in long-term environmental contamination,

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1 such as poisoned aquifers and negative health impacts on Indian
2 nations, tribes and pueblos and local communities, highlighting
3 the need for stronger ecological protections for Mount Taylor
4 and all of the state's natural resources; and

5 WHEREAS, the protection of this sacred mountain is
6 essential for the continuation of traditional practices and
7 ceremonies and the preservation of cultural identity of Indian
8 nations, tribes and pueblos;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
10 OF NEW MEXICO that the senate affirm its commitment to
11 protecting Mount Taylor and oppose any uranium mining projects
12 that threaten its traditional cultural property designation,
13 environmental integrity and sacred status; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate urge federal and
15 state agencies, including the United States forest service and
16 the mining and minerals division of the energy, minerals and
17 natural resources department, to deny permits or authorizations
18 for uranium mining projects within the Mount Taylor traditional
19 cultural property boundaries; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate call upon the
21 United States congress to reform the federal General Mining Act
22 of 1872 to prioritize the protection of sacred cultural sites
23 and to require meaningful tribal consultation in decisions that
24 impact tribal resources; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

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1 transmitted to the United States secretary of the interior, the
2 United States secretary of agriculture, the New Mexico
3 congressional delegation, the governor, the commissioner of
4 public lands, the department of environment and the energy,
5 minerals and natural resources department.

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