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March 23, 2017

Governor Susana Martinez
490 Old Santa Fe Trail #400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Re: Errors in Mr. Barela's Letter of 9/18/15 Affecting Otero County

Dear Governor Martinez,

We need your help.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is seeking a site to perform research and development to evaluate the geosciences for deep borehole disposal of DOE radioactive waste forms. Site selection has narrowed to four counties. Otero County is one of those counties (along with Quay County, NM).

The "deep borehole field test" is almost certainly a prelude to a nuclear dump for DOE weapons waste.

In September 2015 your office issued a letter under Mr. Barela's signature (copy attached). This letter contains misinformation. Misinformation that almost certainly contributed to DOE coming to Otero County. That letter is currently being used by the DOE project contractor, TerranearPMC, LLC to show your (and Otero County's) support for the project, all based on this false information.

As in Quay County, NM, North Dakota and South Dakota, local residents do not support the deep borehole field test project. They have said "NO" loud and clear. Some have been very vocal, all are concerned about the planned future project, that brings DOE bomb waste to their homes and county.

We are asking you to issue a corrected letter to DOE stating the true facts. The facts are that there is limited support (almost zero) in Otero County for this DOE project. The false information that Mr. Barela presented has harmed the DOE and may harm Otero County residents.

Mr Barela states:

"We are aware that southeastern New Mexico land owners have ideal sites for this research and fully support the use of a New Mexico site for this project."

This states "New Mexico land owners" "fully support the use of a New Mexico site for this project."

This is not true. Only three land owners have written in support of this project and two of these are involved in leasing land for the project to DOE. Most land owners do not support this project. We are business owners and land owners. We do not support this project. Stating that New Mexico land owners support this is a broad statement and is a misrepresentation. We live here. We know.

Mr. Barela goes on to state:

“There is broad support in the region for a project of this kind and Otero County has already expressed their support.”

This is not true. We have not expressed support. The Otero County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) does not, and has not expressed support. In fact the BOCC has specifically stated a neutral stance. Polls taken of Otero County residents during public project DOE information meetings show “support” was over 15:1 against the borehole project. In the largest public meeting, residents were polled at over 60:1 against the borehole project (March 2017). At best someone in Otero County might support this project, but there is no broad public support. Stating “Otero County” has expressed support is disingenuous at best.

We call on you to recognize that Otero County citizens and lawmakers do not uniformly support this project and that no broad support exists now or in the past. Further, Otero County should be allowed to express informed consent themselves rather than have the Governor or DOE or Mr. Barela give consent for them.

We urge you to write DOE and correct the facts. Otero County must be allowed to decide not the Governor's office. Presently residents are broadly opposed to this project.

Sincerely,

Walt Coffman

CC: Representative James G. Townsend
Senator Ron Griggs
Otero County BOCC
TerranearPMC
Weed Community and Website