

Resolution 2007 - 75**Moratorium on Oil and Gas Drilling on Otero Mesa
"Salt Basin Aquifer Protection Memorial"**

Whereas, Doña Ana County and the southern New Mexico region continue to have a waning water supply; and,

Whereas, the Salt Basin aquifer has been documented to be the largest untapped fresh water aquifer in New Mexico and may possess as much as 57 million acre feet of water according to the USGS, NM Interstate Stream Commission, and Sandia National Labs; and,

Whereas, the Salt Basin aquifer offers the potential to provide a significant source of water for the future of communities in southern New Mexico, relieving pressures on other shared and waning supplies; and,

Whereas, the quality of the water in the Salt Basin aquifer is currently potentially threatened by the exploration for natural gas under the aquifer; and,

Whereas, the State of New Mexico Oil and Conservation Division (OCD) has documented 1,400 reported cases of groundwater contamination since approximately 1990 resulting from oil and gas operations within our state, and groundwater contamination is a common negative effect of oil and gas exploration activities; and,

Whereas, the Bureau of Land Management has documented the possible gas reserve in and around the Salt Basin aquifer to be of mostly low potential and significantly less than other parts of New Mexico with commercially viable reserves; and,

Whereas, the Salt Basin aquifer has been documented to be a shallow aquifer that is highly susceptible to contamination from oil and gas exploration and operations; and,

Whereas, the State of New Mexico has committed \$1 million dollars to initiate a multi-year study of the Salt Basin aquifer that will define the aquifer's boundaries, recharge zone (land area where water or surface contamination will migrate to the aquifer), and potential for contamination from oil and gas exploration; and,

Whereas, Senators Domenici and Bingaman have jointly sponsored the New Mexico Water Assessment Act which includes a thorough study of the Salt Basin aquifer and identifies it as "a priority study aquifer;" and,

Whereas, Senators Bingaman and Domenici and Representative Udall have contacted the administration requesting a temporary deferment of oil or gas leasing permitted in the region until the hydrological study of the Salt Basin aquifer is complete;

Whereas, it is in Doña Ana County's and southern New Mexico's vital interests to study and understand the hydrological properties of the Salt Basin aquifer and ensure that the Salt Basin aquifer remains unpolluted; and

Now, therefore be it resolved by the Doña Ana County Board of County Commission, that the County calls on the US Department of Interior and the US Bureau of Land Management to immediately enact a temporary moratorium not to exceed three years on all oil and gas leasing and drilling and exploration on the Otero Mesa or until the hydrological study of the Salt Basin aquifer is complete.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 12th day of June 2007.


**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF DOÑA ANA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**


Karen G. Perez, Chairwoman


D. Kent Evans, Vice-Chairman


Oscar Vásquez Butler, Member


Dolores Saldaña-Caviness, Member


William J. McCamley, Member



ATTEST:

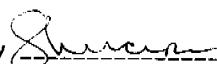


Rita Torres
County Clerk



COUNTY OF DONA ANA) RESOLUTION
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss PAGES: 2

Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
record On The 20TH Day Of June, 2007 at 11:59:37 AM
and Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 0721639
if The Records Of Dona Ana County

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Rita Torres
Deputy  County Clerk, Dona Ana, NM