



**SOCORRO COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
RESOLUTION № 2020-32**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE SUNZIA TRANSMISSION PROJECT RE-ROUTE OUTSIDE OF  
THE WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE NORTHERN CALL UP AREA AND PROPOSED  
AERIAL RIVER CROSSING OUTSIDE OF SOCORRO COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, The Socorro County Commission met in a regular meeting on May 12, 2020 at 10:00 AM in the Socorro County Annex Building, 198 Neel Ave., Socorro, New Mexico 87801; and,

**WHEREAS**, NMSA 1978, Section 4-37-1 (1995) provides that Counties have the power to, “provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity and improve the morals, order, comfort and convenience of any county or its inhabitants”; and

**WHEREAS**, NMSA, 1978, Section 4-38-18 (1976) provides that a Board of County Commissioners has the duty and authority “[t]o represent the county and have the care of the county property and the management of the interest of the county in all cases where no other provision is made by law”; and

**WHEREAS**, the County of Socorro is located in central New Mexico, known for its southwestern cultural traditions, vast, stunning mountain and desert vistas, the natural beauty of the Rio Grande and its bosque which is a component of a major US migratory bird flyway and provides winter refuge for hundreds of thousands of birds; and

**WHEREAS**, the County of Socorro derives economic benefit from the world-renowned USFWS Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, the USFWS Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, and the NMDGF Ladd-Gordon Waterfowl Complex; and

**WHEREAS**, Socorro and vicinity are a NM hotspot for birding and New Mexico is the 5th most visited state by birders; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners, is committed to protecting the County’s traditional land-based customs, and cultures; improving the quality of life in the County; protecting the County’s precious vistas; and developing housing, education and a business-friendly environment that creates prosperity and a bright future for the County’s youth; and

**WHEREAS**, the County is committed to preserving and protecting the health, safety and welfare of its residents and property owners; its environment, ecosystems, air, scenic beauty and other natural resources; and its history, culture and archaeology; all for the benefit of the County and its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, the SunZia Transmission Project (hereinafter “SunZia”) intends to develop two (2) high voltage electric transmission lines anticipated to be approximately 520-miles long spanning parts of New Mexico and Arizona in order to convey up to 4,500 megawatts of renewable energy from New Mexico and Arizona to homes, offices and communities in the Southwestern United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the SunZia Transmission Project previously contemplated a route crossing the White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) Northern Call Up Area and an aerial crossing of the floodplain of the Rio Grande River near Escondida; and

**WHEREAS**, this Board initially adopted Resolutions 2017-40 and 2018-62 opposing the SunZia Transmission Project in its proposed location and adopted Resolution 2019-55 further explaining its objections to the proposed aerial Rio Grande crossing south of Escondida bridge; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Defense has indicated that relocating the SunZia Transmission Project outside of the WSMR Northern Call Up Area would be in the best interest of national security objectives, given the value of WSMR to the national defense; and

**WHEREAS**, SunZia has applied to the federal Bureau of Land Management to amend the federal right of way for the Transmission Project to re-route the proposed transmission line outside (to the north of) the WSMR Northern Call Up Area, with one proposed alternative route crossing the Rio Grande north of Socorro County adjacent to another transmission line (Western Spirit) before continuing on to Pinal County, Arizona; and

**WHEREAS**, in the interest of protecting national security, the County supports SunZia’s efforts to re-route the Transmission Project outside the WSMR Northern Call Up Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the County supports SunZia’s efforts to move its proposed river crossing and further supports the alternative route that moves the aerial river crossing to a location north of Socorro County where it can be adjacent to the aerial Rio Grande River crossing of the proposed Western Spirit transmission line; and

**WHEREAS**, due to SunZia’s efforts to re-route its proposed Transmission Project outside of the WSMR Northern Call Up Area and its proposed relocation of its aerial crossing to the north of Socorro County, this Board rescinds its Resolutions Nos. 2019-55, 2018-62 and 2017-40.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the County supports SunZia’s efforts to re-route outside of the White Sands Missile Range Northern Call Up Area and supports the alternative route that moves the aerial river crossing to a location north of Socorro County where it can be adjacent to the aerial Rio Grande River crossing of the proposed Western Spirit transmission line; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Resolutions Nos. 2019-55, 2018-62, and 2017-40 are hereby rescinded.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the County Manager is requested to expressly communicate this resolution at the time of its passage to the Governor of New Mexico, New Mexico's Congressional Delegation and the New Mexico State Director, Bureau of Land Management.

**ADOPTED, PASSED AND RESOLVED**, this 12<sup>th</sup> day of May 2020.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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MARTHA SALAS, CHAIR  
DISTRICT II

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MANUEL E. ANAYA, VICE CHAIR  
DISTRICT III

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JOE GONZALES, COMMISSIONER  
DISTRICT I

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GLEN DUGGINS, COMMISSIONER  
DISTRICT IV

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ANTONIO RAY MARTINEZ, COMMISSIONER  
DISTRICT V

ATTEST BY:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
BETTY SAAVEDRA, COUNTY CLERK

