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For Immediate Release

Greater Chaco Coalition Applauds State Land Office's Continued Commitment
Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard Renews Moratorium on Oil and Gas Leasing in Greater Chaco

Santa Fe, N.M.: Today, the Greater Chaco Coalition commends New Mexico State Land Office Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard for the renewal of the 2019 [Executive Order No. 2019-002](#). This order [reinstates](#) a moratorium on new oil and gas leasing covering 72,776 acres of state trust lands in the Greater Chaco area through December 21, 2043. The Commissioner's commitment is one step on the path to ending the sacrifice of Indigenous lands and lives to toxic, destructive fossil fuels in Greater Chaco and beyond.

As one of her first acts in office, in 2019 Commissioner Garcia Richard initiated a dialogue with Native American nations, tribes, pueblos of New Mexico, and other stakeholders to explore alternative land uses aligning with landscape protection. Since then, no new state trust lands in the Greater Chaco region have been leased.

This Executive Order aligns with a June 2023 Department of the Interior approval for a [20-year mineral withdrawal](#) within 10 miles of Chaco Culture National Historical Park. Despite a lapse in engagement, the Honoring Chaco Initiative promises landscape-level management and cultural landscape frameworks.

While calls for restraint persist, the Bureau of Land Management continues approving more fracking wells and related infrastructure, contributing to hundreds of new wells since 2019. Despite over two million protest comments calling for restraint, the Greater Chaco region faces escalating environmental threats and [an increase in liquid toxic waste spills](#).

Advocates continue to [urge](#) federal agencies to honor the Greater Chaco region by recommitting to the Honoring Chaco Initiative, aiming to establish a new model for public lands management centered on justice and sustainability. Meanwhile, New Mexico's State Land Office continues to demonstrate commitment to community engagement and Greater Chaco protection.

Advocates will continue urging state officials to expand upon the Greater Chaco moratorium to increase protections and stop pollution from existing oil and gas sites on state land in the region.

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