



RESOLUTION NO. 2026-51

RESOLUTION OPPOSING DEVELOPMENT OF LARGE-SCALE DATA CENTERS WITHIN SIERRA COUNTY AND IMPOSING 18 MONTH MORATORIUM

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Sierra County met in a duly noticed regular Commission meeting on July 21st, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Sierra County Administration Building, 1712 North Date Street, Truth or Consequences, New Mexico 87901; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Sierra County exercises the powers of the County as a body politic and corporate pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 4-38-1; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 4-37-1, counties possess authority to provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity, and improve the order, comfort, and convenience of the county and its inhabitants; and

WHEREAS, Sierra County has long supported the establishment, operation, and continued success of Spaceport America and recognizes the significant economic, educational, scientific, technological, and tourism benefits that the Spaceport has provided and continues to provide to Sierra County, the surrounding region, and the State of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners remains committed to supporting the continued growth and success of Spaceport America through aerospace, commercial spaceflight, advanced manufacturing, research, testing, education, and other innovative industries that complement the Spaceport's mission and provide meaningful economic opportunities for Sierra County residents; and

WHEREAS, Sierra County is a predominantly rural county whose economy has historically relied upon agriculture, ranching, tourism, outdoor recreation, retirement communities, and the responsible development of natural resources; and

WHEREAS, agriculture and ranching remain integral to Sierra County's economy, culture, and heritage and depend upon the continued availability of reliable water resources; and

WHEREAS, Sierra County's water resources are finite, increasingly scarce, and among the County's most valuable public resources, supporting municipalities, agriculture, ranching, businesses, wildlife, recreation, and future economic development; and

WHEREAS, the County continues to experience prolonged drought conditions, increasing demands upon groundwater resources, and uncertainty regarding long-term water availability, requiring careful stewardship and conservation of available water supplies; and

WHEREAS, the Board believes that responsible economic development should occur in a manner that protects Sierra County's limited water resources, agricultural economy, rural character, environmental quality, and the long-term interests of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that while many forms of economic development are compatible with these objectives, certain industrial uses requiring extraordinary quantities of water and electrical power may not be consistent with the long-term sustainability of Sierra County; and

WHEREAS, the Board has become aware of a proposal to construct and operate one or more data centers at or associated with Spaceport America; and

WHEREAS, data centers frequently require substantial quantities of water for cooling operations, consume extraordinary amounts of electrical power, require significant supporting infrastructure, and may place considerable demands upon regional natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Board is concerned that the proposed development of data centers in Sierra could adversely affect Sierra County's groundwater resources, agricultural operations, ranching community, future water availability, electrical infrastructure, environmental resources, and rural quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the Board further believes that preserving Sierra County's limited water resources for residents, agriculture, ranching, existing businesses, and future generations constitutes a compelling public interest; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that Spaceport America is owned and operated pursuant to state law by the New Mexico Spaceport Authority and that Sierra County possesses no regulatory authority over development occurring upon Spaceport America property; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the County's limited jurisdiction, the Board believes it has both the right and the responsibility to express the concerns of Sierra County residents regarding projects that may substantially affect the County's natural resources, economy, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the Board respectfully encourages the New Mexico Spaceport Authority and all state agencies involved in evaluating future development proposals to carefully consider the long-term impacts of water-intensive industrial development upon Sierra County and to prioritize

development that is compatible with the County's natural resources and long-term sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners finds that additional time is necessary to fully evaluate the potential long-term impacts of data center development upon Sierra County, including projected water consumption, electrical demands, impacts on groundwater resources, agriculture, ranching, environmental quality, infrastructure, emergency services, rural character, and the overall long-term sustainability of the County's natural resources and economy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Sierra County that the Board hereby reaffirms its longstanding support for Spaceport America and recognizes its importance as a driver of innovation, scientific advancement, economic development, job creation, tourism, and educational opportunity for Sierra County and the State of New Mexico, and that the Board supports continued investment and development at Spaceport America, including aerospace activities, commercial spaceflight, advanced manufacturing, research, testing, education, and other compatible industries that responsibly utilize the Spaceport's unique assets while protecting Sierra County's natural resources and quality of life;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Sierra County that the Board hereby expresses its firm opposition to the development of data centers within Sierra County, including a proposed development of a data center at Spaceport America, based upon concerns regarding the consumption of substantial quantities of limited water resources, potential adverse impacts to groundwater supplies and long-term water availability, the potential effects upon agriculture, ranching, and other traditional water-dependent industries, extraordinary electrical demand and resulting infrastructure impacts, potential environmental impacts associated with industrial-scale operations, the preservation of Sierra County's rural character and quality of life, and the long-term sustainability of Sierra County's natural resources for current and future generations.

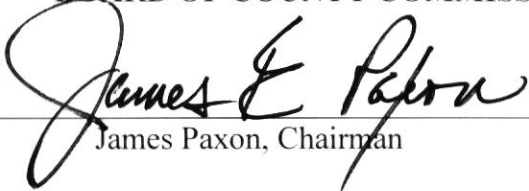
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Sierra County that the Board directs County Administration to transmit executed copies of this Resolution to the Governor of New Mexico, the New Mexico Spaceport Authority, the State Land Office, the Office of the State Engineer, the New Mexico Environment Department, the New Mexico Economic Development Department, members of the Sierra County legislative delegation, and such other governmental officials as the County Manager determines appropriate, and calls upon these parties having jurisdiction over the proposed project carefully evaluate long-term water consumption, groundwater sustainability, agricultural impacts, environmental impacts, electrical infrastructure requirements, alternative cooling technologies that substantially reduce or eliminate water consumption, and the cumulative impacts of additional industrial development upon Sierra County's limited natural resources.

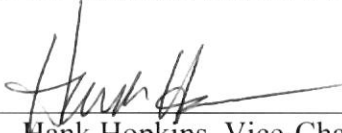
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners hereby imposes an 18 month moratorium on the approval or support of any data center development within Sierra County, to the extent permitted by law, to allow the County sufficient time to conduct or obtain comprehensive studies regarding the long-term impacts of such facilities, including water consumption, electrical demand, groundwater sustainability, agricultural

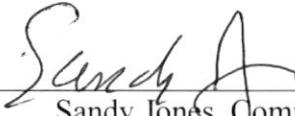
and ranching impacts, environmental effects, infrastructure capacity, emergency services, alternative cooling technologies, economic impacts, and compatibility with the County's rural character and long-term planning objectives, and to consider whether additional ordinances, regulations, or policies are necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

APPROVED, ADOPTED, AND PASSED this 21st day of July, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SIERRA COUNTY


James Paxon, Chairman


Hank Hopkins, Vice-Chairman


Sandy Jones, Commissioner

Attest:


Amy Whitehead, County Clerk

