

Raymond De La Vega

I strongly oppose the issuance of this air quality permit for the Yucca Growth Infrastructure project. This project has the potential to affect far more than its immediate location. Air pollution does not stop at county or state boundaries. Emissions from this facility have the potential to impact residents throughout the Paso del Norte region, including the communities of Doña Ana County, Las Cruces, El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. The New Mexico Environment Department should carefully evaluate cumulative regional air quality impacts, not just the impacts immediately surrounding the facility.

This region already faces significant environmental challenges, including high temperatures, ozone episodes, dust, and wildfire smoke. Adding another major source of emissions risks further degrading air quality for hundreds of thousands of people who live, work, and attend school in this shared airshed. The permitting process should account for cumulative impacts on public health, particularly for children, older adults, and people with respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. I am also deeply concerned about water resources. Southern New Mexico and the surrounding region face chronic water scarcity and prolonged drought. The region is out of water and water table is residing to the south. This project, which has zero benefit to locals will consume the regions water only to make someone else money who does not live or contribute to the community. Decisions about projects of this scale should reflect the long-term sustainability of the region's limited water supply. I am so ashamed of our county representatives.

Finally, I am concerned about the transparency of this project. A proposal with potentially significant regional environmental consequences should be subject to broad public awareness and meaningful public participation. Many residents who could be affected may not have been aware of the project until late in the permitting process or to this day. The public deserves an open, transparent process that allows adequate time to review technical documents, understand potential impacts, and provide informed comments before permits are issued.

Given the potential regional impacts on air quality, the serious concerns regarding scarce water resources, and the importance of a transparent public process, I respectfully request that the New Mexico Environment Department deny this permit unless it can clearly demonstrate that the project will protect public health, safeguard limited natural resources, and fully comply with all applicable environmental laws and regulations.