

Lara Bittencourt

Dear NMED staff, My name is Lara, and while I live in Florianópolis, Brazil, I am deeply concerned about the environmental and social impacts of Project Jupiter, proposed by Yucca Growth Infrastructure, LLC in Doña Ana County, New Mexico. I understand that the company, formerly known as Acoma LLC, initially sought to build two gas-fired power plants. After receiving over 7,000 public comments in opposition, it shifted its strategy and now proposes a fuel cell technology project. However, this so-called "evolution" is merely an attempt to bypass outdated regulations and advance a plan that remains highly polluting. It is unacceptable for the company to frame this change as a reflection of community concern. In truth, the project would still emit up to 10 million tons of greenhouse gases annually—equivalent to the combined emissions of New Mexico's three largest cities: Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Santa Fe. Moreover, the proposed fuel cell technology has never been tested at this scale (37,000 times larger than the existing test unit) and produces hazardous toxic waste, including "desulf canisters." Improper handling of these waste products has already led to millions in fines for Bloom Technologies in other states. The project's location is equally troubling. Schools like Santa Teresa Elementary and High School—where 96% of students are Hispanic—and daycare centers are situated less than 5 miles from the site. Children and vulnerable communities will disproportionately suffer from pollutants such as NOx, CO, and VOCs, making this a clear case of environmental injustice. Additionally, Indigenous communities, including those from Tortugas Pueblo, Ysleta del Sur, and others, have not been adequately informed about the emissions license application. The NMED's mission is to "protect and restore the environment, fostering a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations." Approving this license would directly undermine that mission. I urge the NMED to fully reject Yucca Growth Infrastructure, LLC's application for an emissions license for the YGI Microgrid. If the license is not rejected, I strongly request that the NMED hold a hybrid and bilingual public hearing in the Santa Teresa community, ensuring residents receive clear, accessible information about the risks of this technology. I also ask that the department extend the public comment period to 60 days, allowing for broader and more meaningful participation. New Mexico cannot be a testing ground for untested and hazardous technologies. The future of our planet and local communities hinges on courageous and responsible decision-making. Sincerely, Lara Florianópolis, Brazil