

Ashley Watson

To Whom It May Concern,

I oppose Project Jupiter because I believe some decisions are bigger than economics.

I am not opposed to technology. I am not opposed to investment. I am not opposed to growth. I understand that artificial intelligence will shape the future, and I do not believe New Mexico should reject innovation simply because it is new.

What I reject is the increasingly common idea that every community should be expected to sacrifice whatever is necessary to accommodate the ambitions of the world's largest corporations.

We have reached a point where billion dollar companies arrive with promises of jobs, investment, and prosperity, while communities are expected to absorb the uncertainty. We are told to trust projections, trust future technologies, trust that resources will be managed responsibly, and trust that the long term benefits will outweigh the long term costs. Yet once these projects are built, the consequences belong to the people who live here, not the executives or investors who approved them.

That is not a partnership but an imbalance of power.

New Mexico is not empty space waiting to be optimized. Doña Ana County is not a blank canvas for industrial expansion. It is home to families, farms, wildlife, small businesses, and communities whose relationship with this land stretches back generations. Those interests deserve equal weight, not secondary consideration after corporate growth targets.

Supporters often argue that this project will create jobs. Jobs matter, but employment alone cannot become the standard by which every proposal is judged. By that logic, there would be almost no project too large, too resource intensive, or too disruptive to reject.

It's also still unclear how many PERMANENT full-time jobs will actually exist for NM residents.

I believe economic development should leave a community stronger than it found it. It should protect the resources that make a place livable. It should respect the people who already call that place home. It should not require residents to lower their expectations for transparency, public participation, or environmental stewardship simply because the company involved is wealthy enough to promise billions of dollars.

Perhaps what concerns me most is the precedent.

If projects of this scale can move forward despite unresolved questions about resource use, environmental impacts, and public trust, then we are establishing a dangerous principle that wealth itself is enough to overcome skepticism. That is not how democratic decision making is supposed to work. Communities should not have to prove why they deserve protection. Developers should have to prove why they deserve permission.

Progress is not measured by the size of the buildings we construct or the amount of capital we attract. Real progress is measured by whether we leave behind healthy communities, resilient natural resources, and institutions that people trust.

Future generations will not judge us by how quickly we approved projects. They will judge us by whether we had the wisdom to recognize that not every opportunity is worth accepting simply because it is profitable.

For those reasons, I urge you to reject Project Jupiter.

Sincerely,

Ashley Watson