



Office of the Governor  
**Pueblo of Tesuque**

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Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506

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May 21, 2025

The Honorable Tom Schultz  
Chief of the U.S. Forest Service  
United States Forest Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Schultz,

I write on behalf of the Pueblo of Tesuque to invite you to our Pueblo and to tour the Pecos Watershed in light of the Department's recent decision to halt consideration of increasing protections to the region.

The Pueblo of Tesuque has been connected to the Pecos Watershed since time immemorial. The Watershed plays a key role in delivering clean water to our community and our farmers. Our citizens continue to access the area for ceremonial purposes, hunting, fishing, and gathering medicinal and sacred plants.

The entire region is still recovering from mining operations in the Pecos watershed that took place last century. Heavy snowmelt in 1991 washed a mass of metal pollutants from abandoned mines into the Pecos River. The spill dumped sulfuric acid and other chemicals into the watershed, poisoning our water, killing off fish, and creating significant economic devastation. More than 30 years later, cleanup has cost New Mexico taxpayers \$8 million, and remediation is not complete.

Water is the blood of the Pueblo and all nearby communities. We cannot afford to again place our life-giving waters in the hands of foreign-owned mining corporations. So again, I extend this invitation to you to visit our Pueblo and the region to witness firsthand the beauty of the Pecos Wilderness and the important role that the Pecos watershed plays in our lives.

Sincerely,

Earl Samuel  
Governor  
Pueblo of Tesuque