



**RE: HJR 3 Environmental Rights, CA – NMBC Opposes**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to oppose **House Joint Resolution 3**, which proposes adding expansive and undefined “environmental rights” language to the New Mexico Constitution.

While the goals stated in HJR 3 are well-intentioned, embedding such sweeping concepts as a **“right to a stable climate,” “thriving ecosystems,” and “healthy environments”** into the Constitution creates significant legal, fiscal, and operational risks for **all New Mexicans**, including residents, businesses, and government agencies at every level.

The language in HJR 3 is **extraordinarily broad and vague**. This invites constant litigation over nearly any public or private activity — from infrastructure projects and water systems to housing development, road maintenance, energy use, and land management.

The resolution directs **state, county, and municipal governments to act as trustees of all natural resources**, exposing public agencies to lawsuits challenging routine decisions and long-standing regulatory practices. Even though the resolution states that monetary damages are not allowed, **litigation costs, delays, injunctions, and compliance mandates** would impose major financial burdens on taxpayers and government budgets.

HJR 3 would have a **chilling effect on economic activity**. Businesses in New Mexico — including agriculture, construction, manufacturing, energy, utilities, transportation, and housing — would face uncertainty about whether permits, investments, or expansions could later be challenged as violating newly created constitutional rights. This uncertainty discourages investment, raises costs, and ultimately reduces job creation and opportunities.

The resolution would negatively impact **local governments and public services**. Counties and municipalities already struggle with staffing, infrastructure funding, and regulatory compliance. HJR 3 adds another constitutional mandate without providing guidance, funding, or clear limits — diverting resources away from public safety, roads, schools, water systems, and essential services.

Constitutional amendments should establish **clear, durable principles**, not open-ended policy goals better handled through legislation, rulemaking, and science-based regulation. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to reject this resolution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carla J. Sonntag".

Carla J. Sonntag  
President & CEO