



RESOLUTION № 2022-36

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR DECLARE AN EMERGENCY CONCERNING THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF NEW MEXICO TO COUNTER DRUG AND HUMAN SMUGGLING

WHEREAS, the Valencia County Board of Commissioners met upon notice of a Business Meeting, duly published, at the Valencia County Administration Building, 444 Luna Avenue, Los Lunas, New Mexico 87031 on Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at 5:00 PM as required by law; and,

WHEREAS, NMSA 1978, Section 4-37-1 (1995) provides that Counties have the power to, “provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity and improve the morals, order, comfort and convenience of any county or its inhabitants”; and,

WHEREAS, NMSA, 1978, Section 4-38-18 (1976) provides that a Board of County Commissioner has the duty and authority “[t]o represent the county and have the care of the county property and the management of the interest of the county in all cases where no other provision is made by law; and,

WHEREAS, three of New Mexico’s thirty-three counties form the 180-mile border with Mexico, most of which is marked by barbed wire fences built primarily to keep cattle from wandering across the international border; and,

WHEREAS, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) opioid drug overdose death in the United States increased to 75,637 in 2021 up from 56,064 the year before; and,

WHEREAS, most of this increase is caused by the synthetic opioid Fentanyl which is being smuggled across the southern border. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) reported that the seizure of all drugs has greatly increased in 2021 from 2020 but that the seizure of Fentanyl has increased by 134% in that time period; and,

WHEREAS, these increased seizures demonstrate that there is an illegal smuggling crisis at the border that is getting worse every day; and,

WHEREAS, the epidemic of overdoses from illegally smuggled drugs and the crime that it has been linked to, is not only affecting border towns and large cities, in the rural community of Valencia County hardly a day goes by when there is not a report of a drug related crime or a young person overdosing; too many times in the last year have we lost our youth to fatal overdoses which effects everyone in the County including the members of this board on a personal level; and,

WHEREAS, according to the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) the number of women, children and family units being smuggled into the US has increased in recent years and they often find themselves at risk for assault and abuse such as rape, beatings, kidnapping and robbery; and,

WHEREAS, DHS further states that smugglers regularly overcrowd living and sleeping accommodations, and withhold food and water. In addition, individuals who are smuggled may be forced into human trafficking situations upon their arrival in the U.S. or their families may be extorted; and,

WHEREAS, in August 2005, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (D) declared a state of emergency along the Mexican border, which region he characterized as having been “devastated by the ravages and terror of human smuggling, drug smuggling, kidnapping, murder, destruction of property, and the death of livestock” <available at <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/08/12/newmexico/>> ; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Richardson described the situation back in 2005 as “out of hand” after having taken a helicopter and ground tour of the border near Columbus, New Mexico, wherein he viewed “the trails where these illegal routes take place” and the fenced areas along the border where the fence is “literally nonexistent”; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Richardson characterized the State of Emergency declaration along the Mexican Border as “an act of desperation,” and added in his 2005 interview with the New York Times that “border problems had gone beyond illegal immigration to violent crime”; and,

WHEREAS, since 2005 there has been a substantial increase in drug and human smuggling and the introduction of the new insidious poison of Fentanyl and a renewed declaration of emergency is now needed to allow the State to use its resources to help alleviate the human suffering; and,

WHEREAS, this Board does not believe that this crisis is a political issue as it effects Democrats and Republicans alike and should be addressed by whomever is in the Governor’s Office.

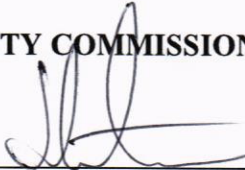
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Valencia that it respectfully calls upon Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, pursuant to the power set forth by Article V, Section 4 of the Constitution of the State of New Mexico appointing the Governor as commander-in-chief of the military forces of this State, to declare an emergency and deploy the New Mexico Army National Guard, New Mexico Air Guard and the New Mexico State Defense Force to Valencia County and to the other counties struggling to deal with crime and human suffering created by the smuggling crisis by assisting the Border Patrol and local law enforcement.

APPROVED, ADOPTED AND RESOLVED this 6th day of April 2022.

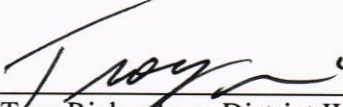
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



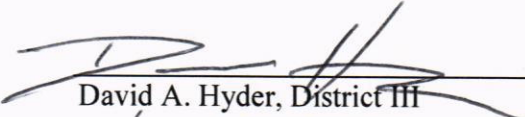
Gerard Saiz, Chair, District I



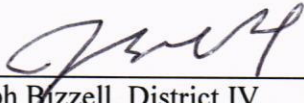
Jhonathan Aragon, Vice-Chair, District V



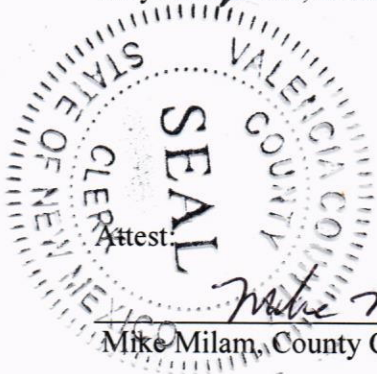
Troy Richardson, District II

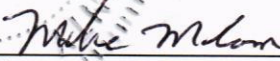


David A. Hyder, District III



Joseph Bizzell, District IV





Mike Milam, County Clerk