

New Mexico is a poor state. We are also a majority minority state. We are a state that both by class and race exist at the bottom of this country's capitalist and white supremacist hierarchies. To make that simple, we are expendable.

Because of this, my home state has filled 2 consistent roles. We have served as a place for large corporations to take resources at a cheap price with little regulation. And then second, we have served as a place to test unsafe technologies on a primarily brown population.

Both of those roles are why a word, or a lie, like produced water exists. It is a product of the first role, resource extraction. This state houses, in the Permian basin, the single cheapest oil field in the world. And I can promise you the oil industry that desecrates that land is heavily unregulated. So much so we don't even know the chemicals they use in combination with our freshwater in the process of fracking. Which brings me to that second role. New Mexico as a testing site. We saw that with the atomic bomb, and the storage of dangerous uranium waste near impacted communities. And we may now see it with the use of fracking waste sludge, as a kind of water. We're talking about a substance whose few identified ingredients include carcinogenic (or cancer-causing) and radioactive chemicals. The little we understand of this fluid we know to be dangerous. But the state government marches on. I don't believe it is a coincidence that the first state testing the harms of fracking waste, is also one of the brownest. Conscious intention or not, this shows a disregard for nonwhite lives consistent with the characteristics of white supremacy.

The reason so many lobbyists and officials are so excited to begin the rulemaking process today around "produced water" is because it could allow them to exploit our state in both of those 2 ways I mentioned before, simultaneously. At the same time they enable the dangerous underregulated fracking industry, they can also test radioactive properties of fracking waste on an innocent population.

So, members of the Oil Conservation Commission, I came here to tell you, with all undue respect. We refuse to be your guinea pigs.

Artemisio Romero y Carver