

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP TO EXPLORE  
3 THE EXPANDED USE OF CITIZEN SCIENCE BY STATE AGENCIES.

4  
5 WHEREAS, New Mexico is rich in natural resources and  
6 wildlife and features outstanding natural areas; and

7 WHEREAS, New Mexico is filled with persons who take  
8 great pride in the beauty of the state and all that the  
9 state's environment has to offer; and

10 WHEREAS, wild friends, an award-winning civics education  
11 program at the university of New Mexico school of law, has  
12 become involved in helping to advance citizen science  
13 initiatives for the New Mexico state government; and

14 WHEREAS, the mission of wild friends is to provide a  
15 statewide, experiential education program that integrates  
16 civics and wildlife law to help students in grades four  
17 through twelve understand the democratic process, develop  
18 good citizenship skills and contribute to wildlife  
19 conservation by involving the students in public policy  
20 projects of their choosing; and

21 WHEREAS, several state agencies have identified the need  
22 for assistance with research and data collection due to a  
23 lack of personnel and have expressed enthusiasm about using  
24 citizen scientists to meet these needs and better engage the  
25 public; and

1           WHEREAS, citizen science, in which members of the public  
2 volunteer to help conduct scientific research, could help  
3 fill the gap between state agency needs for personnel and  
4 available personnel. As one student said, "Citizen science  
5 is an important way to support professional researchers and  
6 also educate community members about problems that affect  
7 us."; and

8           WHEREAS, citizen science can contribute to New Mexico's  
9 economic development, environmental health and community  
10 engagement. As one student said, "Citizen science projects  
11 could provide more outdoor recreation opportunities in New  
12 Mexico.". Other students said that citizen science projects  
13 could "encourage citizens to go out in nature", "promote  
14 active participation in the community" and "raise our  
15 happiness"; and

16           WHEREAS, citizen science projects can engage youth,  
17 connect youth with their communities and expand educational  
18 opportunities. As one student said, "Citizen science gives  
19 me the opportunity to be involved in science in a simple and  
20 productive way.". Other students said that citizen science  
21 can "create future opportunities when we grow up", "inspire  
22 young people toward a career that focuses on New Mexico lands  
23 and its inhabitants" and "encourage youth to be involved in  
24 STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] and  
25 conservation efforts" by "bringing out [a] love for nature";

1 and

2 WHEREAS, citizen science projects have been particularly  
3 beneficial in monitoring bird populations, water quality and  
4 plant species proliferation and will continue to be helpful  
5 in the future; and

6 WHEREAS, New Mexico is home to more than five hundred  
7 fifty species of birds, and the need to protect them is  
8 great, yet many species are in decline. As one wild friends  
9 student said, "Birds form a distinctive part of New Mexico's  
10 unique heritage.". Another student said, "Birds are amazing  
11 animals with unique behaviors, and citizen science allows me  
12 to learn more about them."; and

13 WHEREAS, a citizen science pilot project about birds  
14 could help state agencies identify what the challenges and  
15 opportunities are for future projects while providing much-  
16 needed data on bird populations and engaging the public. As  
17 one student said, "It would help New Mexican citizens become  
18 invested and aware about our diverse bird populations and  
19 concern for their future.", while another student said that  
20 the pilot project could "help state agencies conduct studies  
21 of bird populations by providing valuable data on a large  
22 scale that may not otherwise be gathered"; and

23 WHEREAS, several state agencies and other organizations  
24 have expressed interest in convening a working group to  
25 implement a bird pilot project and discuss how to best move

1 citizen science forward in New Mexico because, as one student  
2 said, "Learning about and caring for the environment is not a  
3 one-person job, and state agencies can't do it by  
4 themselves.";

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
6 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state  
7 parks division of the energy, minerals and natural resources  
8 department, the department of environment, the state land  
9 office, the department of game and fish and other interested  
10 state departments and agencies be requested to participate in  
11 a working group convened and managed by the wild friends  
12 program to develop and recommend actions to establish and  
13 expand the use of citizen science using the best available  
14 science and data collection practices, including a pilot  
15 project for the use of the wild friends program and for use  
16 as a template for state government agencies; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be  
18 requested to submit a report to the appropriate interim  
19 legislative committee by October 31, 2024 that details the  
20 working group's recommendations, including infrastructure,  
21 funding needs and strategies to advance the use of citizen  
22 science; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
24 transmitted to the state parks division of the energy,  
25 minerals and natural resources department, the department of

1 environment, the state land office, the department of game and  
2 fish, natural heritage New Mexico and the wild friends program  
3 at the university of New Mexico school of law. \_\_\_\_\_

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