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HOUSE MEMORIAL 21

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

INTRODUCED BY

Joseph L. Sanchez

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 11, 2025 "ACEQUIA DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, for generations, acequias have supported a way of life centered around local agriculture and customs of sharing water; and

WHEREAS, acequias are a centuries-old form of water governance in New Mexico that have created a cultural landscape with a web of waterways that nurture tens of thousands of acres of farmland; and

WHEREAS, acequia customs and traditions regarding agriculture, seed saving, irrigation practices and food preservation are important aspects of the cultural heritage of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, acequias contribute to the well-being and

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1 livelihood of thousands of families who generate income from
2 farming and ranching, thereby supporting diversification of New
3 Mexico's economy through local food production; and

4 WHEREAS, acequias and community ditches number over seven
5 hundred in New Mexico with each one governed, operated and
6 maintained by elected commissioners and mayordomos; and

7 WHEREAS, the role of acequias in local governance has been
8 affirmed by laws enacted by the state recognizing acequias as
9 political subdivisions and enabling acequias to have important
10 powers in local water management; and

11 WHEREAS, for more than fifty years, acequias have come
12 together to protect and defend water rights, advocate for water
13 policies strengthening acequia governance and support funding
14 programs for acequia infrastructure; and

15 WHEREAS, the New Mexico acequia association was
16 established in 1989 to advocate for water policy beneficial to
17 acequias, and the acequia commission was created in statute in
18 1993 to serve as an advisory body in state government; and

19 WHEREAS, hydrological studies by the New Mexico water
20 resources research institute at New Mexico state university
21 have documented hydrological benefits of acequias, including
22 aquifer recharge through earthen ditches; and

23 WHEREAS, as water management is complicated by long-term
24 drought and increasing demands for water, acequias will
25 continue to be important in any decisions about water policy at

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1 the local and state levels;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 11,
4 2025 be declared "Acequia Day" in the house of representatives
5 in honor of the contributions of acequias to the history,
6 culture, economy and management of water resources in New
7 Mexico; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
9 transmitted to the New Mexico acequia association and the
10 acequia commission.