A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING 2021 AS THE "INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CAVES AND KARST".

WHEREAS, caves and related landforms like sinkholes, springs and sinking streams, collectively known as karst, present some of the world's most dramatic landscapes; and

WHEREAS, caves and karst have diverse economic, ecologic, scientific and cultural impacts around New Mexico, the United States and the world; and

WHEREAS, Carlsbad Caverns national park alone has an economic benefit of about thirty-four million dollars ($34,000,000) each year for New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, other New Mexico cave tourist destinations include Bottomless Lakes state park, Santa Rosa blue hole, the ice cave and Bandera volcano and El Malpais national monument;
and

WHEREAS, the country's first underground wilderness was
established in New Mexico to protect the spectacular
Lechuguilla cave; and

WHEREAS, the country's first underground national
conservation area was established in New Mexico to protect the
equally amazing Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave national
conservation area; and

WHEREAS, the primary water supplies for roughly fifteen
percent of New Mexico are karst aquifers, especially supporting
the communities in the southeast quadrant of the state; and

WHEREAS, recognizing New Mexico's significance and
interest in the area, the United States congress established
the national cave and karst research institute, located in New
Mexico in partnership with the state and under the
administration of the New Mexico institute of mining and
technology; and

WHEREAS, insect-eating bats from New Mexico's caves and
around the country save American agriculture twenty-three
billion dollars ($23,000,000,000) each year in pesticides; and

WHEREAS, globally, bats help produce more than four
hundred fifty foods, medicines and industrial products, in
addition to other benefits; and

WHEREAS, caves in New Mexico and worldwide are the main
repositories of thousands of years of rich cultural history
found nowhere else; and

WHEREAS, karst and related pseudokarst areas are landscapes that make up twenty-five percent of the United States and about twenty percent of the planet's land surface; and

WHEREAS, while cave and karst areas have multiple benefits, they also pose many challenges, as their aquifers are easily contaminated and drained, and sinkholes alone cause over three hundred million dollars ($300,000,000) in road damage in the United States each year; and

WHEREAS, through the national cave and karst research institute, the New Mexico institute of mining and technology and their partners, New Mexico is taking the lead in sustainably maximizing the benefits of caves and karst, while reducing adverse impacts, through research and education programs; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the many benefits and challenges provided by caves and karst in the areas where they occur, the international union of speleology is spearheading the celebration of 2021 as the international year of caves and karst;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the governor be requested to acknowledge the importance of caves and karst in New Mexico by issuing a proclamation recognizing 2021 as the
"International Year of Caves and Karst"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
transmitted to the governor and the executive director of the
national cave and karst research institute.

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