

**44TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION,
2000**

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
AND THE LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO COOPERATE IN AN
EXAMINATION OF THE STATE'S TRAFFIC SAFETY GOALS AND ITS USE
OF RESOURCES TO MEET THOSE GOALS.

WHEREAS, the legislature recognizes that reducing New
Mexico's high levels of motor vehicle crash deaths and
injuries is a high priority for citizens and must be a
priority for all branches of their government; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has always confronted its history of
high levels of motor vehicle crash deaths and injuries with
an extraordinary record of achievement at reducing those
levels, using strong goals and best available laws,
leadership and programs; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's successes in the past, present and
future at traffic safety progress depend on close

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1 collaboration with our national leaders and partners in the
2 traffic safety movement; and

3 WHEREAS, national traffic safety leadership in the
4 partners in progress coalition, including the United States
5 department of transportation, mothers against drunk driving,
6 the highway safety representatives of the national governor's
7 association and the national commission against drunk
8 driving, have set forth a goal of reducing national alcohol-
9 related crash deaths from fifteen thousand nine hundred
10 thirty-six in 1998 to eleven thousand by 2005, a thirty-one
11 percent decline, and have identified steps to be taken to
12 achieve that goal; and

13 WHEREAS, the United States department of transportation
14 and its partners have set forth a goal of reducing national
15 crash deaths from forty-one thousand four hundred eighty in
16 1998 to thirty-five thousand six hundred by 2005, a fourteen
17 percent decline, and have identified steps to be taken to
18 achieve that goal; and

19 WHEREAS, the state highway and transportation
20 department's highway safety and performance plan 2000-2005
21 and its compass goals set forth the executive's goals for the
22 state's traffic safety programs for 2000-2005 and the planned
23 use of federal and state traffic safety resources to meet
24 those goals; and

25 WHEREAS, the state highway and transportation
department's plan calls for a reduction in alcohol-related
crash deaths from one hundred eighty-eight in 1998 to one

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1 hundred sixty-one in 2005, a fourteen percent decline that is
2 less than one-half the planned national thirty-one percent
3 reduction, costing one hundred seven lives from diminished
4 progress in our state relative to the nation; and

5 WHEREAS, the state highway and transportation
6 department's plan calls for a reduction in alcohol-related
7 crash deaths from four hundred twenty-four in 1998 to four
8 hundred three in 2005, a five percent reduction that is
9 nearly one-third the planned national fourteen percent
10 decline, costing one hundred sixty-one lives from diminished
11 progress in our state relative to the nation; and

12 WHEREAS, the state highway and transportation
13 department's plan for below-average progress at saving New
14 Mexican lives compared to planned average progress in other
15 states would cause New Mexico to move from fourth-highest in
16 per capita alcohol-related crash deaths in 1998 to second by
17 2005 and to move from seventh-highest in per capita total
18 crash deaths in 1998 to third in 2005; and

19 WHEREAS, the weak goals in the plan are at odds with the
20 history of achievement in traffic safety over many years when
21 New Mexico's progress has surpassed that of the nation at
22 large, and it is crucial that the state continue that strong
23 record since our death rates still remain far above national
24 levels despite narrowing the gap; and

25 WHEREAS, the state highway and transportation department
indicates that their weak goals represent the best that can
be expected from their current programs; and

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1 WHEREAS, the state highway and transportation department
2 leaves unexpended each year substantial resources that could
3 instead be invested in vigorous, creative, effective programs
4 to achieve progress equaling or exceeding the national
5 average progress planned for other states; and

6 WHEREAS, the legislature's performance-based budgeting
7 depends for its success on having very ambitious goals met
8 with excellent programs and that process is compromised by
9 reference to the state highway and transportation
10 department's weak safety goals; and

11 WHEREAS, the legislature wants to maximize the effective
12 use of money appropriated for services for traffic safety and
13 to ensure that funds are expended effectively for the
14 specific purposes for which they are appropriated;

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
16 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state department of highway and
17 transportation and its transportation programs division
18 cooperate with the legislative finance committee in examining
19 traffic safety expenditures and programs to verify that all
20 funds available are being expended properly and for vigorous
21 and effective programs that pursue strong traffic safety
22 goals; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the cooperative effort
24 determine whether traffic safety resources and authorities
25 are being used with maximum effectiveness to achieve the
goals of the legislature's traffic safety initiatives,
including all aspects of driver training and motorcycle

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1 training; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this examination of the
3 programs and the expenditure of funds include verification
4 that all services provided are procured in accordance with
5 law and applicable state and federal rules of operation for
6 the funds involved; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state highway and
8 transportation department be requested to convene a process,
9 closely involving all the state traffic safety leaders listed
10 in the plan as contributors to its development, to develop
11 ambitious goals consistent with national goals, set through
12 consensus rather than unilaterally by the department, and to
13 identify programs to meet those more ambitious goals; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state highway and
15 transportation department request the assistance of the
16 national highway traffic safety administration to facilitate
17 that consensus process in a climate of cooperation and
18 conflict resolution; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature request that
20 the national highway traffic safety administration analyze
21 New Mexico goals and programs and suggest modifications to
22 ensure goals meet or exceed average planned national progress
23 and identify opportunities for program improvements to
24 achieve goals and submit its analysis to the state highway
25 and transportation department and to the interim legislative
health and human services committee to support that process;
and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state highway and
2 transportation department amend its highway safety and
3 performance plan 2000-2005 and its compass goals to
4 incorporate the traffic safety goals that result from this
5 consensus process; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative finance
7 committee and the state department of highway and
8 transportation report their findings on the use of traffic
9 safety funds and opportunities to improve goals to the
10 interim legislative health and human services committee by
11 October 1, 2000; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state highway and
13 transportation department report on the ambitious goals and
14 program changes that emerge from the consensus process to the
15 interim legislative health and human services committee by
16 October 1, 2000; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
18 sent to the secretary of highway and transportation, the
19 director of the transportation programs division, the
20 regional administrator of the national highway traffic safety
21 administration, the director of the legislative finance
22 committee and the interim legislative health and human
23 services committee.