

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 44

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2006

INTRODUCED BY

Harriet I. Ruiz

A JOINT MEMORIAL

AFFIRMING THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO'S COMMITMENT TO HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT WORK COOPERATIVELY TO FULFILL THIS COMMITMENT.

WHEREAS, the state of New Mexico is committed to healthy communities for all of its residents; and

WHEREAS, environmental degradation poses risks to public health; and

WHEREAS, communities are particularly at risk from environmental degradation due to the existing and threatened contamination of scarce resources, especially ground water; and

WHEREAS, environmental degradation and public health problems tend to be concentrated in communities without political power and resources, especially minority and low-

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1 income communities; and

2 WHEREAS, some communities are subject to an  
3 overconcentration of polluting and risk-producing practices  
4 that degrade the environment, and those practices have  
5 cumulative effects; and

6 WHEREAS, the state is committed to effective participation  
7 by all of its residents in the environmental decision-making  
8 processes that affect their lives and their communities; and

9 WHEREAS, the department of health and the department of  
10 environment have recognized that state agencies that protect  
11 the public health, safety and welfare need to collaborate more  
12 effectively to address the issues of healthy communities and  
13 public participation in environmental decision-making; and

14 WHEREAS, the federal government has underscored the  
15 importance of healthy communities and of participation by all  
16 people in environmental decision-making processes by the  
17 promulgation of United States Executive Order 12898 and the  
18 creation of the national environmental justice advisory  
19 council; and

20 WHEREAS, Governor Bill Richardson has underscored the  
21 importance of healthy communities and more meaningful public  
22 participation in environmental decision-making by promulgating  
23 New Mexico Executive Order EO-05-056;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the

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1 department of environment be requested to jointly review their  
2 functions, operations and work as well as the constitutional  
3 provisions, statutes, regulations and programs that the  
4 departments administer to determine:

5 A. the extent to which each department's work,  
6 constitutional provisions, statutes, regulations and programs  
7 serve to promote healthy communities and meaningful public  
8 participation in environmental decision-making, particularly in  
9 minority and low-income communities;

10 B. the changes in each department's work,  
11 constitutional provisions, statutes, regulations and programs  
12 that would be required for the department to more effectively  
13 promote healthy communities and meaningful public  
14 participation, particularly in minority and low-income  
15 communities; and

16 C. the changes in each department's work,  
17 constitutional provisions, statutes, regulations and programs  
18 that would be required for the two departments to work  
19 cooperatively on the issues of environmental degradation and  
20 public health and of public participation in environmental  
21 decision-making, particularly in minority and low-income  
22 communities; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the departments of health and  
24 environment report on their joint findings and their work to  
25 the appropriate interim legislative committee no later than

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August 31, 2006; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor, the secretary of health and the secretary of environment.

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