

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO CONVENE A WORK GROUP TO PREPARE A REPORT ON THE HISTORICAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE OF THE RIO ABAJO VALLEY AND THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES IN THE VALLEY, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP THE AREA.

WHEREAS, the lower Rio Grande river valley, known as the Rio Abajo valley, is a rich geographic part of the state, stretching from Algodones, New Mexico, to south of Belen and including communities in and around Mountainair, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Rio Abajo valley has historically provided, and continues to provide, significant contributions to the state's history, culture, commerce and scientific communities and has been overlooked as a corridor of particular significance in the state; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico towns and cities in the Rio Abajo valley offer important historical and cultural features in communities that are otherwise struggling to survive; and

WHEREAS, the Rio Abajo valley communities of Socorro, Belen, Tome, Los Lunas, Los Padillas, Peralta, Armijo, Atrisco, Barelvas, Old Albuquerque, Los Ranchos, Alameda, Bernalillo and Algodones were crucial to historical agricultural production in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, famous routes such as El Camino Real, the Turquoise Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, the Salt Mission Trail, the Enchanted Circle, United States Route 66 and the Jornada del Muerto, now known as El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, traverse the "Land of Enchantment", and several of the routes run through the Rio Abajo valley; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's landscape, and specifically the Rio Abajo valley, is regarded by Native Americans and others as sacred land; and

WHEREAS, much has been documented about the history, mystery, myths and miracles of Spain's venerable Maria de Jesus de Agreda, also known as the "Blue Nun", and her influence on the ancient Jumano and Isleta peoples and other early New Mexicans, particularly those who lived in the Rio Abajo valley; and

WHEREAS, pilgrimages to New Mexico are made to visit cultural, historical and religious sites in the state, including sites near Mountainair, New Mexico, such as the ancient pueblo villages of Abo, Gran Quivira and Quarai; at Salinas Pueblo Missions national monument; and

WHEREAS, recent pilgrimages to the Rio Abajo valley have been made, and future pilgrimages are planned, in honor of the Blue Nun, whose influence in and around the Salinas Pueblo Missions national monument is felt and acknowledged by many to this day; and

WHEREAS, other national and state monuments and significant sites, including El Camino Real international heritage center and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro national historic trail, are located in and around the Rio Abajo valley; and

WHEREAS, pilgrimages and tourism in and around the Rio Abajo valley are helping to establish international relationships and to foster friendships and economic exchange at many levels, highlighting the historical, cultural, commercial and scientific importance of the Rio Abajo valley; and

WHEREAS, the people of New Mexico benefit when communities, organizations and governmental bodies and agencies are provided with support for community development, research, public education, programs related to local history and culture, and economic and social stabilization; and

WHEREAS, areas in the Rio Abajo valley have great economic potential and are primed for development; and

WHEREAS, economic revival of the Rio Abajo valley can and should be fostered through the application of available resources to enhance commerce and tourism in the area, as well as through international, national and statewide promotion of this culturally and historically significant area of the state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico legislative council be requested to convene a work group to prepare a report on the importance of the Rio Abajo valley and the needs of the communities within the Rio Abajo valley, including recommendations on how to support the development and promotion of the valley's historical, cultural, commercial and scientific attributes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group consist of at least one representative each from:

A. the economic development department;

B. the cultural affairs department;

C. the tourism department; and

D. the New Mexico institute of mining and technology, the university of New Mexico and New Mexico state university, from within a department emphasizing history, archaeology, anthropology, culture, agribusiness or the sciences; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group be requested to present its report and recommendations to the interim economic and rural development committee by October 1, 2013; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretaries of economic development, cultural affairs and tourism and to the presidents of the New Mexico institute of mining and technology, university of New

Mexico and New Mexico state university.