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SENATE MEMORIAL 70

51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2014

INTRODUCED BY

William P. Soules

A MEMORIAL

HONORING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WILDERNESS ACT OF
1964.

WHEREAS, in 1964, the United States congress passed the
Wilderness Act by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, and this
farsighted legislation was signed by President Lyndon B.
Johnson on September 3, 1964; and

WHEREAS, the Wilderness Act created America's national
wilderness preservation system of federal lands to be
"administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people
in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and
enjoyment as wilderness, and will provide for the protection of
these areas and the preservation of their wilderness
character"; and

WHEREAS, the Wilderness Act made it the "policy of

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1 Congress to secure for the American people of present and
2 future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of
3 wilderness ... in order to assure that an increasing
4 population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing
5 mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the
6 United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated
7 for preservation and protection in their natural condition";
8 and

9 WHEREAS, wilderness, "in contrast with those areas where
10 man and his own works dominate the landscape, is recognized as
11 Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence,
12 which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the
13 forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially
14 unnoticeable, and has outstanding opportunities for solitude or
15 a primitive and unconfined type of recreation"; and

16 WHEREAS, President Barack Obama said in proclaiming
17 September each year as "National Wilderness Month": "The
18 mystery and wonder of wilderness is deeply rooted in our
19 national character. For many of the first Americans – American
20 Indians and Alaska Natives – the wilderness provided a source
21 of sustenance and a foundation for their ways of life. Later,
22 as explorers and the pioneers of a young country moved west,
23 they found adventure and new beginnings in the landscapes of
24 our Nation. From our earliest days, America's identity has
25 been tied to the powerful waterfalls, soaring peaks, and vast

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1 plains of its land"; and

2 WHEREAS, inspired by Aldo Leopold and the Wilderness Act
3 of 1964, New Mexico established the first designated wilderness
4 area, the Gila wilderness, and now there are twenty-five
5 congressionally designated wilderness areas that cover one
6 hundred nine million five hundred eleven thousand nine hundred
7 sixty-six acres, allowing past, present and future New Mexicans
8 to take special pride and additional pleasure in enjoying the
9 benefits of the wilderness;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
11 OF NEW MEXICO that the significance of the national wilderness
12 preservation system to America's cultural, scientific,
13 historical, cultural and spiritual heritage be recognized; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the wilderness be recognized
15 as a place where everyone can experience the spirit that has
16 shaped America; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in this golden anniversary
18 year of the Wilderness Act, all Americans be urged to visit and
19 enjoy wilderness areas, to learn their history and to aid in
20 the continuing protection of America's precious national
21 treasures; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
23 transmitted to the New Mexico wilderness alliance.