

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES
3 DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM FOR RECLAMATION OF ABANDONED
4 URANIUM MINES IN NEW MEXICO AND TO KEEP NEW MEXICO'S
5 CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION APPRISED OF ISSUES RELATED TO THE
6 LEGACY OF ABANDONED URANIUM MINES AND FUNDING NEEDS FOR
7 RECLAMATION.

8
9 WHEREAS, when the United States atomic energy commission
10 created the domestic uranium procurement program in the
11 1950s, many companies and individuals in New Mexico responded
12 to the need for uranium to fuel the federal government's
13 defense requirements for nuclear weapons; and

14 WHEREAS, a uranium mining industry was created almost
15 overnight in New Mexico, which became the largest
16 uranium-producing state in the nation, with over three
17 hundred eighty million pounds produced for the nuclear
18 weapons program; and

19 WHEREAS, the domestic uranium procurement program was
20 very successful and resulted in the operation of numerous
21 mines throughout New Mexico, mainly in Cibola and McKinley
22 counties; and

23 WHEREAS, the domestic uranium procurement program met
24 its production goals in the mid-1980s and most of the small
25 company and individual mine sites were abandoned with little

1 or no reclamation, as there were no standards or requirements
2 for reclamation at that time; and

3 WHEREAS, these uranium sites make up a legacy of
4 abandoned mines in New Mexico and few of these sites have
5 been reclaimed since the 1960s; and

6 WHEREAS, New Mexico's response to the federal
7 government's call for uranium to supply its nuclear program
8 greatly assisted America's national defense effort; and

9 WHEREAS, the support of the federal government is now
10 needed to help secure funding to reclaim these sites and
11 resolve the nearly fifty-year legacy left behind in New
12 Mexico; and

13 WHEREAS, the mining and minerals division of the energy,
14 minerals and natural resources department has identified
15 approximately two hundred fifty legacy sites on private and
16 public land where there is record of uranium production; and

17 WHEREAS, the division has surveyed the majority of these
18 sites to prioritize them based on potential environmental
19 risk factors in the mostly remote areas where the sites
20 exist;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
22 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the mining and minerals division of
23 the energy, minerals and natural resources department be
24 requested to continue its important work and to develop a
25 program to identify the specific steps necessary to begin

1 reclaiming the surveyed abandoned uranium sites, including an
2 efficient method for estimating reclamation costs when
3 federal or other funding becomes available for this purpose;
4 and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the mining and minerals
6 division of the energy, minerals and natural resources
7 department also be requested to keep New Mexico's
8 congressional delegation apprised of issues related to the
9 legacy of abandoned uranium mines in New Mexico, the results
10 of the surveyed sites and the need for funding to begin
11 reclamation of the sites; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
13 transmitted to New Mexico's congressional delegation, the
14 governor and the secretary of energy, minerals and natural
15 resources. _____

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