

1 SENATE MEMORIAL 102

2 **52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
12 DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM FOR RECLAMATION OF ABANDONED  
13 URANIUM MINES IN NEW MEXICO AND TO KEEP NEW MEXICO'S  
14 CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION APPRISED OF ISSUES RELATED TO THE  
15 LEGACY OF ABANDONED URANIUM MINES AND FUNDING NEEDS FOR  
16 RECLAMATION.

17  
18 WHEREAS, when the United States atomic energy commission  
19 created the domestic uranium procurement program in the 1950s,  
20 many companies and individuals in New Mexico responded to the  
21 need for uranium to fuel the federal government's defense  
22 requirements for nuclear weapons; and

23 WHEREAS, a uranium mining industry was created almost  
24 overnight in New Mexico, which became the largest uranium-  
25 producing state in the nation, with over three hundred eighty

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1 million pounds produced for the nuclear weapons program; and

2 WHEREAS, the domestic uranium procurement program was very  
3 successful and resulted in the operation of numerous mines  
4 throughout New Mexico, mainly in Cibola and McKinley counties;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, the domestic uranium procurement program met its  
7 production goals in the mid-1980s and most of the small company  
8 and individual mine sites were abandoned with little or no  
9 reclamation, as there were no standards or requirements for  
10 reclamation at that time; and

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

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

17 WHEREAS, the support of the federal government is now  
18 needed to help secure funding to reclaim these sites and  
19 resolve the nearly fifty-year legacy left behind in New Mexico;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, the mining and minerals division of the energy,  
22 minerals and natural resources department has identified  
23 approximately two hundred fifty legacy sites on private and  
24 public land where there is no record of uranium production; and

25 WHEREAS, the division has surveyed the majority of these

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1 sites to prioritize them based on potential environmental risk  
2 factors in the mostly remote areas where the sites exist;

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
4 OF NEW MEXICO that the mining and minerals division of the  
5 energy, minerals and natural resources department be requested  
6 to continue its important work and to develop a program to  
7 identify the specific steps necessary to begin reclaiming the  
8 surveyed abandoned uranium sites, including an efficient method  
9 for estimating reclamation costs when federal or other funding  
10 becomes available for this purpose; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the mining and minerals  
12 division of the energy, minerals and natural resources  
13 department also be requested to keep New Mexico's congressional  
14 delegation apprised of issues related to the legacy of  
15 abandoned uranium mines in New Mexico, the results of the  
16 surveyed sites and the need for funding to begin reclamation of  
17 the sites; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
19 transmitted to New Mexico's congressional delegation, the  
20 governor and the secretary of energy, minerals and natural  
21 resources.