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HOUSE MEMORIAL 74

**52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2016**

INTRODUCED BY

Zachary J. Cook

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING RECOGNITION OF THE COLLABORATIVE FOREST RESTORATION PROGRAM BENEFITS TO OTERO, LINCOLN AND CHAVES COUNTIES.

WHEREAS, authorized by congress in 2000, the collaborative forest restoration program in New Mexico established a new and innovative program to provide cost-sharing grants for collaborative forest restoration projects on public land; and

WHEREAS, the objectives of the collaborative forest restoration program are to promote healthy watersheds and reduce the threat of large, high-intensity wildfires, improve communication and joint problem-solving, encourage sustainable communities and forests through collaborative partnerships and develop, demonstrate and evaluate ecologically sound forest restoration; and

WHEREAS, Otero, Lincoln and Chaves counties share four

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1 hundred ninety thousand acres of forests and watersheds; and

2 WHEREAS, the westside Sacramento mountains watershed  
3 restoration and fuels reduction project was created by the  
4 forestry division of the energy, minerals and natural resources  
5 department in the division's 2013 New Mexico communities at-  
6 risk assessment plan to identify areas at high risk for  
7 wildfires; and

8 WHEREAS, the westside Sacramento mountains watershed  
9 restoration and fuels reduction project applied for and  
10 received a planning grant from the collaborative forest  
11 restoration program to fund the completion of resource surveys  
12 and documents to comply with the National Environmental Policy  
13 Act of 1969 required for all projects on public lands; and

14 WHEREAS, the proposed action of the westside Sacramento  
15 mountains watershed restoration and fuels reduction project is  
16 to use a combination of mechanical thinning and prescribed fire  
17 on approximately six thousand seven hundred acres of Lincoln  
18 national forest and city of Alamogordo land to reduce the  
19 threat of high-intensity wildfires and promote healthy  
20 watersheds; and

21 WHEREAS, to enhance the current efforts among  
22 collaborative forest restoration program partners, the  
23 Sacramento mountain wood industry summit will be convened in  
24 Ruidoso on March 30-31, 2016; and

25 WHEREAS, information on forest prescriptions and watershed

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1 restoration practices, emerging markets and demands for forest  
2 projects and highlights of successful forestry and wood product  
3 business will be discussed at the summit; and

4 WHEREAS, a summit objective is to revitalize the logging  
5 industry in the region, expanding the efforts of additional  
6 collaborative forest restoration programs and stewardship  
7 projects to perform environmental studies that will enable a  
8 timber supply for more than a decade within all four hundred  
9 ninety thousand acres of forested areas, excluding classified  
10 wilderness areas; and

11 WHEREAS, the benefits of revitalization of the logging  
12 industry will positively affect the local and regional economy;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, the project will result in increased surface  
15 water flows to the Sacramento mountain watershed for the  
16 benefit of the city of Alamogordo, surrounding communities and  
17 the region; and

18 WHEREAS, increased surface and groundwater supplies will  
19 aid reduced forest density and will positively affect ranchers  
20 and wildlife; and

21 WHEREAS, within Otero, Lincoln and Chaves counties,  
22 logging and thinning efforts allow for forest restoration where  
23 there is now a dangerous overgrowth and growing fuel load; and

24 WHEREAS, immediate benefits of logging and thinning  
25 efforts include:

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1           A. the prevention of devastating crown fires that  
2 could threaten life and property;

3           B. an increase in water surface flows and aquifer  
4 storage to maximize a good source of water for all water-rights  
5 users and the environment; and

6           C. the allowance of more plant life and water for  
7 agricultural, livestock and wildlife growth; and

8           WHEREAS, a byproduct of a reinvested logging industry  
9 would include job creation and the possibility of a railroad  
10 stop in the tri-county area as tonnage increases; and

11           WHEREAS, continuing support of the collaborative forest  
12 restoration program and the westside Sacramento mountains  
13 watershed restoration and fuels reduction project is vital to  
14 promoting healthy watersheds and ecologically sound forest  
15 restoration in New Mexico;

16           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
17 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the benefits of  
18 the collaborative forest restoration program to New Mexico be  
19 recognized; and

20           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Otero, Lincoln and Chaves  
21 counties be commended for their continuing efforts in  
22 encouraging sustainable communities and forests through their  
23 collaborative partnership; and

24           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
25 transmitted to the county commission chairs of Otero, Lincoln

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1 and Chaves counties, the mayor of Alamogordo and the partners  
2 of the westside Sacramento mountains watershed restoration and  
3 fuels reduction project.

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