

1 A MEMORIAL

2 DECLARING FEBRUARY 16, 2017 AS "ACEQUIA DAY" IN THE NEW
3 MEXICO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; RECOGNIZING THE
4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACEQUIAS TO THE HISTORY, CULTURE, ECONOMY
5 AND MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES IN NEW MEXICO.

6
7 WHEREAS, for generations, acequias have supported a way
8 of life centered around local agriculture and customs of
9 sharing water; and

10 WHEREAS, acequias are a centuries-old form of water
11 governance in New Mexico that have created a cultural
12 landscape with a web of waterways that nurture tens of
13 thousands of acres of farmland; and

14 WHEREAS, acequia customs and traditions regarding
15 agriculture, seed saving, irrigation practices and food
16 preservation are important aspects of the cultural heritage
17 of New Mexico; and

18 WHEREAS, acequias contribute to the well-being and
19 livelihood of thousands of families who generate income from
20 farming and ranching, thereby supporting diversification of
21 New Mexico's economy through local food production; and

22 WHEREAS, acequias and community ditches number over
23 seven hundred in New Mexico with each one governed, operated
24 and maintained by elected commissioners and mayordomos; and

25 WHEREAS, the role of acequias in local governance has

1 been affirmed by laws enacted by the state of New Mexico
2 recognizing acequias as political subdivisions and enabling
3 acequias to have important powers in local water management;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, for the past fifty years, acequias have come
6 together to protect and defend water rights, advocate for
7 water policies strengthening acequia governance and support
8 funding programs for acequia infrastructure; and

9 WHEREAS, the New Mexico acequia association was
10 established in 1989 to advocate for water policy beneficial
11 to acequias, and the New Mexico acequia commission was
12 created in statute in 1993 to serve as an advisory body in
13 state government; and

14 WHEREAS, hydrological studies by the New Mexico water
15 resources research institute at New Mexico state university
16 have documented hydrological benefits of acequias, including
17 aquifer recharge through earthen ditches; and

18 WHEREAS, as water management is complicated by long-term
19 drought and increasing demands for water, acequias will
20 continue to be important in any decisions about water policy
21 at the local and state levels;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
23 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE NEW MEXICO that February 16,
24 2017 be declared as "Acequia Day" in the house of
25 representatives in honor of the contributions of acequias to

1 the history, culture, economy and management of water
2 resources in New Mexico; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the house of representatives
4 recognize the importance of acequias in New Mexico water
5 policy and encourage state agencies to consult with acequia
6 leadership in decisions that may affect acequias; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
8 transmitted to the New Mexico acequia association and the New
9 Mexico acequia commission.

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