

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 25

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ACEQUIAS AND COMMUNITY DITCHES TO
NEW MEXICO'S ECONOMY.

WHEREAS, for centuries, acequias have been the lifeblood
of communities throughout New Mexico, creating a common
cultural and historical heritage and providing water for food
production; and

WHEREAS, agriculture contributes two billion six hundred
thousand dollars (\$2,000,600,000) to the economy of New Mexico
annually, based on the United States department of
agriculture's 2012 census of agriculture; and

WHEREAS, agriculture from counties with significant
numbers of acequias comprises an estimated two hundred million
dollars (\$200,000,000) of agriculture's market value based on
county level data for which the annual county market value is

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1 between six million dollars (\$6,000,000) and seventy million
2 dollars (\$70,000,000), depending on the county; and

3 WHEREAS, in counties with acequias, agriculture is a
4 significant sector of the economy that supports the livelihood
5 of farmers and ranchers; and

6 WHEREAS, the tourism economy contributes to tens of
7 thousands of jobs in New Mexico, including in rural areas where
8 the image of the acequia is imprinted on a cultural landscape
9 that draws visitors; and

10 WHEREAS, in New Mexico, water is scarce and fully
11 allocated, and rural and agricultural water rights are under
12 threat of being transferred to urban and industrial uses; and

13 WHEREAS, acequia farmland and water rights are the
14 foundation of a rural economy that can support economic growth
15 by building local food systems that provide fresh, locally
16 grown food and by supporting rural livelihoods and jobs; and

17 WHEREAS, a state-based strategy to build upon acequia
18 agriculture should include policy protections for farmland and
19 water rights, investing in farmer training as a type of
20 workforce development and inclusion of acequias in local
21 economic development initiatives;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
23 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it recognize the importance of
24 acequias to rural economic development because of their
25 contributions to farm and ranch economies and the cultural

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1 landscapes that support tourism; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico department of
3 agriculture and the economic development department be
4 requested to assist the New Mexico acequia association in
5 developing programs and policy recommendations intended to
6 recognize the economic value of acequias in policy decisions by
7 various state agencies and to strengthen the role of acequias
8 in rural economic development initiatives; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
10 transmitted to the director of the New Mexico department of
11 agriculture, the college of agricultural, consumer and
12 environmental sciences of New Mexico state university the
13 secretary of economic development, the acequia commission and
14 the New Mexico acequia association.

