

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 25

2 **53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

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

13  
14 WHEREAS, for centuries, acequias have been the lifeblood  
15 of communities throughout New Mexico, creating a common  
16 cultural and historical heritage and providing water for food  
17 production; and

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

22 WHEREAS, agriculture from counties with significant  
23 numbers of acequias comprises an estimated two hundred million  
24 dollars (\$200,000,000) of agriculture's market value based on  
25 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.

