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SENATE MEMORIAL 66

54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2019

INTRODUCED BY

Gay G. Kernan

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON HOW THE STATE MAY BEST REQUIRE ASSURANCES FOR WIND TURBINE DECOMMISSIONING.

WHEREAS, in 2017, the American wind energy association ranked New Mexico as the nation's fastest-growing state for wind energy construction; and

WHEREAS, there are at least seventeen wind projects and over one thousand wind turbines in the state, with several more projects either under development or under construction; and

WHEREAS, most wind turbines have a working life of between twenty and twenty-five years; and

WHEREAS, decommissioning a wind turbine at the end of its working life is estimated to cost well over two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000); and

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1 WHEREAS, due to the size of wind turbines, it may be
2 impossible for a landowner to safely and efficiently remove a
3 defunct turbine from the property; and

4 WHEREAS, the placement of wind turbines and wind farms has
5 an environmental cost on the land, including the building of
6 roads where no roads previously existed, the installation of
7 transmission lines and other infrastructure and the disturbance
8 of soils that may have been productive farmland; and

9 WHEREAS, current state law does not require wind energy
10 companies to set aside funds for the decommissioning of wind
11 turbines or to plan for inevitable decommissioning and the
12 restoration of land; and

13 WHEREAS, without proper regulation, many wind turbines and
14 associated infrastructure may remain in place long after the
15 end of their useful life and become the burden of the current
16 or future owners of the land;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
18 OF NEW MEXICO that the energy, minerals and natural resources
19 department be requested to study how the state may best require
20 assurances for the decommissioning of wind turbines and the
21 restoration of lands used for wind turbine and farm siting; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the energy, minerals and
23 natural resources department be requested to work with
24 stakeholders, including the state land office, the federal
25 bureau of land management, representatives of the wind energy

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industry, representatives of New Mexico counties and other interested parties, in undertaking the study; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the energy, minerals and natural resources department be requested to present the findings of its study to the interim legislative committee that studies energy issues by November 1, 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of energy, minerals and natural resources and the co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative council.