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SENATE MEMORIAL 20

**57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025**

INTRODUCED BY

Pete Campos

A MEMORIAL

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE DETERIORATION OF DAMS IN NEW MEXICO  
AND URGING STATE LEADERS TO COLLABORATE IN ESTABLISHING A  
COMPREHENSIVE, STATEWIDE DAM REHABILITATION PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, dams serve a critical role in the infrastructure  
of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, dams provide essential benefits to the state and  
its residents, including flood control, water storage,  
irrigation, hydropower generation and recreation, all of which  
are vital to the economic and social well-being of the state's  
communities; and

WHEREAS, the majority of dams in New Mexico are older than  
fifty years, with an average age of sixty-five years, and  
numerous dams are more than one hundred years old; and

WHEREAS, dam engineering and construction technology have

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1 improved over the past many decades, and past practices have  
2 been outlawed; and

3 WHEREAS, dams in the state have deteriorated from age,  
4 have been insufficiently maintained and repaired and, due to  
5 changes in the environment and downstream area, should now be  
6 classified as high hazard potential dams; and

7 WHEREAS, many of the state's dams are intact but  
8 deficient; and

9 WHEREAS, the frequency of erratic and unpredictable storms  
10 has increased in recent years, with fifteen flash flood  
11 emergencies in 2024; and

12 WHEREAS, Peterson dam overtopped and its diversion  
13 structures and channels failed; and

14 WHEREAS, watersheds were burned down by the Hermits Peak-  
15 Calf Canyon fire; and

16 WHEREAS, Roswell, after receiving fifty percent of its  
17 average annual rainfall in a matter of hours, and Ruidoso  
18 experienced devastating flooding, with numerous overtopping  
19 incidents; and

20 WHEREAS, the dam safety bureau of the office of the state  
21 engineer has been actively regulating dams and updating lists  
22 of deficient high hazard dams; and

23 WHEREAS, the dam safety bureau has been successful in  
24 applying for and receiving dam rehabilitation grants, recently  
25 completed the first phase of a screening level risk assessment

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1 and developed a geographic information system tool to expedite  
2 hydrologic analysis and improve risk assessment; and

3 WHEREAS, while these efforts have helped the state to  
4 identify the highest risk dams and prioritize them for risk  
5 reduction, these efforts have also clarified that the bureau is  
6 a regulatory agency and does not have the mandate or resources  
7 to rehabilitate dams, nor is there a statewide program in New  
8 Mexico to support dam rehabilitation; and

9 WHEREAS, the potential impact of dam failures to the state  
10 would be catastrophic and threatens water storage, agricultural  
11 production, public safety and key state industries; and

12 WHEREAS, the proactive rehabilitation and modernization of  
13 New Mexico's dams through a statewide program would protect the  
14 state's vital resources and industries, as well as ensure the  
15 public's safety and welfare;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
17 OF NEW MEXICO that the state of New Mexico recognize the  
18 importance of dams and the need for timely intervention as the  
19 risk of a catastrophic dam incident continues to rise as the  
20 dams age without adequate maintenance and face increasingly  
21 severe storms; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that leaders of the state be urged  
23 to collaborate in establishing a comprehensive, statewide  
24 program to support dam rehabilitation through identifying  
25 needs, prioritizing projects, seeking funding and assisting dam

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1 owners with planning, project development, applying for grants  
2 and managing the grants and projects; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
4 transmitted to the governor, the director of the water resource  
5 allocation program of the office of the state engineer, the  
6 secretary of homeland security and emergency management, all  
7 members of the legislature, the office of the state engineer  
8 for the state engineer and for distribution to all owners and  
9 operators of dams in New Mexico and members of the New Mexico  
10 watershed and dam owners coalition.