

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO APPROPRIATE MONEY FOR AND DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR TO IMPLEMENT THE URBAN INTERFACE PROGRAMS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW MEXICO STATE FORESTER AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF NEW MEXICO TO REDUCE THE HIGH FOREST FIRE DANGER IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, over seventy-five years of fire suppression in New Mexico has resulted in extreme fuel-loading on federal forest land; and

WHEREAS, conditions on the federal forest land have created emergency situations threatening New Mexico communities as demonstrated by the Cerro Grande fire's destruction of a large part of Los Alamos and the Viveash fire's threat to the Las Vegas watershed; and

WHEREAS, the budgets of the United States departments of agriculture and the interior for preventive thinning are disproportionately smaller than fire suppression budgets; and

WHEREAS, local thinning contractors and local federal fire teams have immediate impact on improving the resource, protecting the community from disaster and benefiting the economy; and

WHEREAS, the proper management of the state's national forests is a matter of continuing concern requiring long-term

planning, human resource development and funding; and

WHEREAS, the federal Organic Administration Act of 1897 created the national forests "to improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States"; and

WHEREAS, the Organic Administration Act of 1897 requires the secretary of agriculture to "make provisions for the protection against destruction by fire and depredations"; and

WHEREAS, in the federal Water Resources Planning Act, congress expressed its intent to "encourage the conservation, development, and utilization of water and related land resources of the United States on a comprehensive and coordinated basis by the Federal Government, States, localities, and private enterprise"; and

WHEREAS, congress enacted the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act in 1954 declaring a menace to the national welfare of erosion and floodwater and sediment damages in watersheds and declaring congress' intent to cooperate with the states and their political subdivisions for the purpose of preventing such damages, conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water and land to preserve, protect and improve the nation's land and water

resources and the quality of the environment; and

WHEREAS, congress created urban interface programs in partnership with the state and local governments to reduce fuel loads, create fire breaks and protect private, county, state and federal property;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the United States congress be requested to appropriate money for and direct the department of agriculture and the department of the interior to implement the urban interface programs in partnership with the New Mexico state forester and local governments of New Mexico to reduce the high forest fire danger in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of agriculture and the department of the interior be requested to establish urban interface programs in New Mexico for long-term remediation and fire management; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretaries of agriculture and the interior, the state forester and the New Mexico congressional delegation.