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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 20

45TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2002

INTRODUCED BY

James R. Madalena

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE STATE LAND OFFICE TO WORK WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NEW MEXICO BISON ASSOCIATION AND THE INTERTRIBAL BISON COOPERATIVE TO SET ASIDE PARTS OF THE KIOWA NATIONAL GRASSLAND AND STATE LAND IN HARDING COUNTY FOR THE REINTRODUCTION OF BISON.

WHEREAS, herds of bison were indigenous to and previously roamed the grasslands in Union and Harding counties; and

WHEREAS, the United States forest service, a division of the United States department of agriculture, has over one hundred thousand of acres of grassland in Harding and Union counties called the Kiowa national grassland, where tall prairie grasses still grow; and

WHEREAS, the state land office also has many hundreds of acres of state land in Harding county near the Kiowa national

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1 grassland that are also prime habitat for bison; and
2 WHEREAS, the New Mexico bison association members and the
3 intertribal bison cooperative members in New Mexico have been
4 raising bison and have become experts in bison culture; and
5 WHEREAS, the pueblos of Taos, Picuris, Pojoaque, San
6 Juan, Nambe, Tesuque and Sandia have increased their bison
7 herds to a point where additional land is needed to sustain
8 the herds' growth; and
9 WHEREAS, the pueblos raising bison must severely restrict
10 the size of their bison herds because their small land base
11 cannot support continued growth of bison herds; and
12 WHEREAS, restoration of the bison on the Kiowa national
13 grassland and on state grassland in Harding county would
14 complement efforts of the soil conservation service and United
15 States forest service to return those grasslands to the health
16 and balance that was present before the great depression and
17 the days of the dust bowl when most of the topsoil was lost
18 due to cultivation of the soil and unfavorable climatic
19 conditions;
20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
21 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the United States forest service and
22 the state land office be requested to enter into discussions
23 with representatives from the New Mexico bison association and
24 members from New Mexico of the intertribal bison cooperative
25 to develop a plan that will allow bison to be restored to the

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1 Kiowa national grassland and to the state lands in Harding
2 county or to other federal or state lands in New Mexico; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States forest
4 service and the state land office be requested to provide
5 information to the New Mexico bison association and the
6 intertribal bison cooperative regarding the availability of
7 leaseholdings that would be appropriate for establishing a
8 bison herd; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
10 transmitted to the United States secretary of agriculture, the
11 director of the United States forest service, the commissioner
12 of public lands, the New Mexico bison association, the
13 intertribal bison cooperative and the governors of the pueblos
14 of Taos, Picuris, San Juan, Pojoaque, Nambe, Tesuque and
15 Sandia.

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