1	HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 29
2	46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2004
3	INTRODUCED BY
4	Mimi Stewart
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10	A JOINT MEMORIAL
11	REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A STUDY
12	TO ASSESS SCHOOL DISTRICTS' NEEDS FOR AIR CONDITIONING ON
13	SCHOOL BUSES AND TO DEVELOP POTENTIAL FUNDING AND AN EQUITABLE
14	ALLOCATION SYSTEM
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16	WHEREAS, the number of school buses statewide is
17	approximately two thousand three hundred, of which only about
18	nineteen percent have air conditioning; and
19	WHEREAS, the public education department provides approval
20	and funding for school districts or school bus contractors to
21	purchase school buses; and
22	WHEREAS, the public education department does not
23	automatically approve the purchase of a school bus with air
24	conditioning, as air conditioning is considered "optional
25	equipment" under the department's current school transportation
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rules; and

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WHEREAS, school districts that want to purchase school buses with air conditioning currently need to request special funding from the public education department; and

WHEREAS, the public education department includes within its budget the number of buses eligible for replacement for contract and school-owned operations based on the established criteria for the normal replacement cycle of twelve years and for emergency replacement; and

WHEREAS, the cost to include manufacturer-installed air conditioning in a new school bus at time of purchase ranges from eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and the cost to retrofit air conditioning that meets manufacturer standards ranges from ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000); and

WHEREAS, school buses may be operated year-round to transport children, including those with special needs, in areas of the state where temperatures may reach over one hundred degrees, resulting in exposure of the children to possible health risks or requiring alternative transportation by parents or others to avoid such risks; and

WHEREAS, there are special-needs children who are not able to take advantage of a public school's severe disabilities program because they have special transportation requirements that a school district cannot provide; and

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<u>underscored mterial = new</u> [bracketed mterial] = delete WHEREAS, children may be transported during summer conditions on school buses without air conditioning and with closed windows because sensitive children with sensory stimulation conditions that require windows to be closed are also on board, which may result in potential harm to all; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need to provide all New Mexico children, regardless of season, with public school transportation that is safe and comfortable;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department be requested to determine the need for and the cost of air conditioning on school buses in each school district and to investigate several phase-in options pertinent to the state's school bus replacement schedule and the transport of specialneeds students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education department's assessment include recommendations on funding and an equitable allocation system to ensure that the state can best meet the need for air conditioning on school buses for students in all school districts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the public education department.

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