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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 29

46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2004

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

A JOINT MEMORIAL

**REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A STUDY
TO ASSESS SCHOOL DISTRICTS' NEEDS FOR AIR CONDITIONING ON
SCHOOL BUSES AND TO DEVELOP POTENTIAL FUNDING AND AN EQUITABLE
ALLOCATION SYSTEM**

**WHEREAS, the number of school buses statewide is
approximately two thousand three hundred, of which only about
nineteen percent have air conditioning; and**

**WHEREAS, the public education department provides approval
and funding for school districts or school bus contractors to
purchase school buses; and**

**WHEREAS, the public education department does not
automatically approve the purchase of a school bus with air
conditioning, as air conditioning is considered "optional
equipment" under the department's current school transportation**

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1 rules; and

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

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

10 WHEREAS, the cost to include manufacturer-installed air
11 conditioning in a new school bus at time of purchase ranges
12 from eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) to ten thousand dollars
13 (\$10,000) and the cost to retrofit air conditioning that meets
14 manufacturer standards ranges from ten thousand dollars
15 (\$10,000) to twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000); and

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

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

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