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**HOUSE MEMORIAL 17**

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

**INTRODUCED BY**

**Ben Lujan**

**A MEMORIAL**

**RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CUMBRES AND TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD TO THE OPERATION RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE RAILROAD.**

**WHEREAS, the Cumbres and Toltec scenic railroad is the finest and most spectacular example of steam-era mountain railroading in North America, a living museum proudly owned by the states of Colorado and New Mexico and governed by the Cumbres and Toltec scenic railroad commission formed by an interstate compact between the two states; and**

**WHEREAS, the nonprofit friends of the Cumbres and Toltec scenic railroad and its nonprofit affiliate, the Rio Grande railway preservation corporation, together known as "the friends", have played a substantial role over the past fifteen years in the operation, restoration and preservation of the**

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1 railroad under agreements with the commission; and

2 WHEREAS, the friends, with its nearly two thousand members  
3 from across American and other countries, provides over twenty  
4 thousand volunteer hours each year, restoring with painstaking  
5 care the historic railroad structures and rolling stock all  
6 along the railroad in New Mexico and Colorado in addition to  
7 conducting various historic interpretation programs for  
8 visitors; and

9 WHEREAS, when the railroad was faced with an imminent  
10 shutdown five years ago that would have devastated the region,  
11 the friends raised the necessary funds from its members and  
12 contracted to operate the railroad; and

13 WHEREAS, the friends has since provided over one million  
14 three hundred thousand dollars (\$1,300,000) of working capital  
15 in order to keep the railroad operating, despite its  
16 deteriorated condition and despite a series of costly new  
17 federal regulatory mandates; and

18 WHEREAS, when the railroad was faced with having to  
19 suspend operations because its steam locomotives did not comply  
20 with new federal regulations, the friends spearheaded a public  
21 and private initiative that culminated in a recent grant of  
22 over one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from the federal  
23 government for rebuilding locomotives; and

24 WHEREAS, in further support of the railroad, the friends  
25 recently launched a fundraising campaign, "Another Century of

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1 Narrow Gauge Steam", which has already raised over five hundred  
2 thousand dollars (\$500,000) in private contributions;

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
4 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that, thanks to the  
5 wisdom of the commission in relying upon the friends and thanks  
6 to the generous and unstinting efforts by the friends to  
7 provide money, time and expertise, the railroad has overcome an  
8 extraordinary series of financial and regulatory shocks over  
9 the past five years, any one of which could have resulted in  
10 the railroad ceasing operations; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission and the friends  
12 be requested to continue to strengthen their collaboration so  
13 that the railroad and the region it serves can further benefit  
14 from this vital public and private partnership; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
16 transmitted to the Cumbres and Toltec scenic railroad  
17 commission, the friends of the Cumbres and Toltec scenic  
18 railroad and the Rio Grande railway preservation corporation.