

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION, WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE GOVERNOR, THE SECRETARY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THE STATE ENGINEER AND THE SECRETARY OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION, TO STUDY THE MOST EFFECTIVE OPTIONS FOR NEW MEXICO TO CONSERVE AND DEVELOP GROUND WATER IN THE SALT BASIN AND OTHER GROUND WATER BASINS OF NEW MEXICO FOR THE BENEFIT AND USE BY NEW MEXICO COMMUNITIES.

WHEREAS, water is essential for survival and for sustaining the state's economies; and

WHEREAS, ground water resources provide a bank to sustain communities during droughts when surface water becomes unreliable; and

WHEREAS, speculators are buying farm and ranch land in Texas, New Mexico and other western states for the land's ground water rights to sell to growing cities; and

WHEREAS, this kind of speculation not only threatens existing farm and ranch economies but challenges those cities and urban communities to make wise decisions about the use of limited water supplies, to practice conservation and to spend public money for water supplies wisely and efficiently; and

WHEREAS, the salt basin of New Mexico and Dell valley of Texas exemplify the west's harsh dilemmas over ground water resources, with its one-hundred-square-mile ground water lake

generating legal feuds, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, among farmers, ranchers and water speculators such as Phil Anschutz; and

WHEREAS, other speculators, such as T. Boone Pickens, have bought out ranchers and farmers in the Texas panhandle, where they plan to pump ground water out from under New Mexico farmers, ranchers and communities; and

WHEREAS, New Mexicans also feud over water a little bit, as well as worry about legal assaults by the state of Texas over river compacts; and

WHEREAS, some resident's thoughts about where and how to use available water are constrained by old habits and old assumptions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the interstate stream commission be requested to proactively analyze and assess new options available to New Mexico to conserve and develop salt basin ground water for the benefit and use by New Mexico communities and to develop a more strategic policy for protecting New Mexico's ground water resources along the borders with Texas and other states; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor, the secretary of economic development, the state engineer and the secretary of finance and administration cooperate and assist the interstate stream commission in development of a more

strategic vision for New Mexico's water resources, especially the salt basin and the Ogallala aquifer, rather than habitually following typical reactionary tactics when crises occur; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the interstate stream commission report its findings and recommendations for legislation to the legislature by December 1, 2005; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the interstate stream commission, the governor, the secretary of economic development, the state engineer and the secretary of finance and administration.