

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 23

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2006

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, THE FOREST AND WATERSHED RESTORATION INSTITUTE AT NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY, THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO COLLABORATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOREST AND WATERSHED HEALTH PLAN AND THE NON-NATIVE PHREATOPHYTE/WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is recognized as a national leader in watershed restoration and management, because it has adopted two cutting-edge statewide strategic plans, the forest and watershed health plan and the non-native phreatophyte/watershed management plan, each of which was requested by the legislature and the governor; and

WHEREAS, the creation of the plans was predicated on the

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1 current diminished state of New Mexico's watersheds, and
2 because existing and projected drought conditions in New Mexico
3 underscore the need to give an even higher priority to
4 protecting and restoring New Mexico's watersheds, water supply
5 and water quality; and

6 WHEREAS, recommendations from the forest and watershed
7 health plan and the non-native phreatophyte/watershed
8 management plan call for the agencies to implement the plans
9 through a broadly inclusive collaborative process, recognizing
10 that New Mexico's continued national leadership in watershed
11 restoration is dependent upon the successful implementation of
12 the plans through such a process; and

13 WHEREAS, the heart of the plans is to address watershed
14 restoration at a landscape scale by empowering local
15 communities to engage in integrated projects to improve
16 ecosystem health in New Mexico's forests and riparian areas by
17 addressing issues such as water supply, water quality,
18 interstate compact and treaty water delivery obligations,
19 reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, protection of
20 wildlife habitat, public access to natural resource recreation
21 areas, protection of drinking water supplies and increasing the
22 economic health and well-being of both rural and urban
23 communities through biomass-based and other emerging economic
24 development opportunities; and

25 WHEREAS, in 2004, congress enacted Public Law 108-317,
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1 which authorized up to fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000)
2 per year to establish and fund forest and watershed restoration
3 institutes in three states; and

4 WHEREAS, the forest and watershed restoration institute at
5 New Mexico highlands university was created with state-
6 supported matching funds for the purposes of providing the best
7 available science for use by land managers and promoting
8 community collaboration in support of landscape-scale
9 restoration projects in coordination with New Mexico's
10 universities; and

11 WHEREAS, the energy, minerals and natural resources
12 department, the New Mexico department of agriculture and the
13 forest and watershed restoration institute are committed to
14 implementation and integration of the plans in ways that will
15 promote a collaborative conservation ethic, accountability for
16 the use of public funds, leveraging of federal funds and the
17 application of the best available science and technology to
18 inform projects; and

19 WHEREAS, these agencies agree that New Mexico must fully
20 engage the state's resources to address these issues; and

21 WHEREAS, restoring New Mexico's watersheds to a healthy
22 state will require a long-term commitment of time and
23 resources, and this work reflects a new priority to fully
24 coordinate all related efforts in the state without regard to
25 jurisdiction; and

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1 WHEREAS, the recommendations from the forest and watershed
2 health plan, the non-native phreatophyte plan and the forest
3 and watershed restoration institute's work plan call for
4 increased and better coordination with state, federal, local
5 and tribal programs to leverage existing financial and other
6 resources more effectively; to identify new resources; and to
7 facilitate public awareness of the risks unhealthy watersheds
8 pose to New Mexico's cultures and traditions, to the
9 environment, to the state's economic health and to the quality
10 of life for New Mexico's residents; and

11 WHEREAS, the energy, minerals and natural resources
12 department, the New Mexico department of agriculture and the
13 forest and watershed restoration institute have convened an
14 initial work group of representative stakeholders for the
15 purpose of developing a set of recommendations to address the
16 issues stated above;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
18 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that in order to achieve success in the
19 implementation of the forest and watershed health plan and the
20 non-native phreatophyte/watershed management plan, each adopted
21 in 2005, the energy, minerals and natural resources department
22 and the New Mexico department of agriculture, in cooperation
23 with the soil and water conservation commission, be requested
24 to continue to collaborate with the forest and watershed
25 restoration institute and to continue to engage the work group

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1 and additional stakeholders for the purpose of developing a set
2 of recommendations to address long-term funding and
3 coordination among state, federal, local, private, tribal
4 entities and state resources; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the agencies report their
6 recommendations to the appropriate interim committee by July 1,
7 2006; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
9 transmitted to the secretary of energy, minerals and natural
10 resources, the director of the New Mexico department of
11 agriculture, the chair of the soil and water conservation
12 commission and the director of the forest watershed restoration
13 institute at New Mexico highlands university.

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