

A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING SOSTENGA!, THE CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AT NORTHERN NEW MEXICO COLLEGE, AS A STATE RESOURCE FOR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is ranked first in the nation in food insecurity and third in hunger; and

WHEREAS, low-income New Mexico families spend as much as twenty-six percent of their annual income on food, a proportion that is double that of the national average; and

WHEREAS, evidence suggests that many New Mexicans, especially those living in rural areas, do not have adequate access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate foods because they lack access to grocery stores and transportation; and

WHEREAS, health problems caused by poor nutrition, including obesity and diabetes, cost New Mexico three hundred twenty-four million dollars (\$324,000,000) annually; and

WHEREAS, those health problems can be remedied with improved nutrition through adequate access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate foods; and

WHEREAS, farm and ranch land has been supplanted by real estate development, particularly in northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, agricultural producers are increasingly searching for additional economic development activities, such as office and technical work, to augment a chosen agrarian lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, sustenance farming has been the life blood of northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, northern New Mexico college strives to expand the college's capacity to address these issues through Sostenga!, the center for sustainable food, agriculture and environment and its commercial kitchen to promote healthy eating and lifestyles, work force development, value-added food production, entrepreneurship and management; and

WHEREAS, northern New Mexico college's Sostenga! center seeks to develop educational programs, community resources and a food cooperative to provide healthy local produce, support local farmers and market value-added local products;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Sostenga!, the center for sustainable food, agriculture and environment at northern New Mexico college, is hereby recognized as a state resource for participatory research and community involvement for environmental health, food security and economic development in northern New Mexico, and that this resource enhances the state's capability to address the public health problems of diabetes, obesity and rural economic and community

development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of the governor be requested to provide information to the department of health and the economic development department that Sostenga!, the center for sustainable food, agriculture and environment at northern New Mexico college, is a resource for participatory research, community involvement, environmental health, food security and economic development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of the governor be requested to direct the economic development department to provide support in the form of business development assistance and assistance in the creation of a food cooperative to sell local produce and value-added products in Rio Arriba county, and that the economic development department report to the appropriate legislative interim committee regarding the level of support to Sostenga! and the related food cooperative initiatives by November 2007; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of the governor and any appropriate state agencies include representatives of Sostenga! in health, economic development and food security initiatives, particularly where the assets of northern New Mexico may be utilized or its needs may be addressed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor, the secretary of economic development, the director of the New Mexico department of

agriculture and the president of northern New Mexico college.