

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT TO PROTEST THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S NEW ARSENIC STANDARD.

WHEREAS, the United States environmental protection agency has changed the standard for the allowable level of arsenic in drinking water from fifty parts per billion to ten parts per billion; and

WHEREAS, the new standard has required New Mexicans to spend approximately six hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$650,000) to date, but it is estimated that one hundred thirty-five million dollars (\$135,000,000) is needed to rebuild water treatment facilities and that approximately twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) will be needed annually in additional operating expenses; and

WHEREAS, seventy-seven million five hundred thousand dollars (\$77,500,000) has been submitted this year in capital outlay requests for arsenic removal upgrades to water treatment systems; and

WHEREAS, water bills to consumers in the affected areas will increase between forty dollars (\$40.00) and one hundred dollars (\$100) per month; and

WHEREAS, the environmental protection agency bases the new standard on foreign studies that related high arsenic

levels in the range of several hundred parts per billion to adverse health effects; and

WHEREAS, the environmental protection agency cannot produce data to demonstrate adverse health effects of the current arsenic levels in New Mexico water; and

WHEREAS, on the contrary, a study in Utah demonstrates that background levels of arsenic found in the American west have no adverse health effects; and

WHEREAS, the source of arsenic in New Mexico water is volcanic soils, and arsenic has always been present in the water with no demonstrable adverse effects on public health; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, the New Mexico legislature requested the environmental protection agency to relax the arsenic standard with no result;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that congress and the president be requested to rescind the decision by the environmental protection agency to lower the arsenic standard; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the New Mexico congressional delegation and to the president.