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SENATE MEMORIAL 81

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

Lynda M. Lovejoy

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO FUND THE CONSTRUCTION
OF THE NAVAJO INDIAN IRRIGATION PROJECT.

WHEREAS, in 1850, the United States senate ratified a
treaty with the Navajo Nation that committed the United States
to legislate and act so as to secure the permanent prosperity
and happiness of the Navajo people; and

WHEREAS, in 1868, the United States senate ratified a
second treaty with the Navajo Nation that recognized the
importance of water and agriculture to the self-sufficiency of
the Navajo people; and

WHEREAS, after ten years of intense negotiations among the
United States, the state of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation,
in 1962, congress enacted Navajo Indian irrigation project
legislation to fulfill, in part, the United States treaty

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1 obligations in regard to water supplies and a farming operation
2 for the Navajo Nation; and

3 WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation also gave valuable concessions
4 in exchange for the Navajo Indian irrigation project, allowing
5 water from the San Juan basin, to which the Navajo had valid
6 claims, to be transported to the Rio Grande basin, for the
7 substantial benefit of non-Navajos and that companion project,
8 the San Juan-Chama project, was completed and the residents and
9 businesses of the Rio Grande basin continue to enjoy the
10 benefits of the bargain; and

11 WHEREAS, the 1962 act reflected the agreement among the
12 United States, the state of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation,
13 and it obligated the United States to construct and maintain
14 over one hundred ten thousand acres of farms for the benefit of
15 the Navajo people; and

16 WHEREAS, the Navajo Indian irrigation project was
17 originally estimated to be completed in about twelve years,
18 contemporaneously with the San Juan-Chama project, but
19 forty-nine years later, only approximately eighty thousand
20 acres of the promised over one hundred ten thousand acres have
21 been completed; and

22 WHEREAS, in 1970, Navajo agricultural products industry, a
23 farming and agribusiness enterprise located south of
24 Farmington, was established to develop the Navajo Nation's
25 economy in northwest New Mexico by farming the Navajo Indian

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1 irrigation project lands and engaging in value-added
2 agricultural activities; and

3 WHEREAS, Navajo agricultural products industry's customers
4 include major food companies in the United States and
5 internationally, and its "Navajo pride" brand has gained
6 excellent consumer acceptance as a high-quality product; and

7 WHEREAS, Navajo agricultural products industry is a
8 diverse, profitable business enterprise that directly
9 contributes over thirty-five million dollars (\$35,000,000)
10 annually to the regional economy, and Navajo agricultural
11 products industry-related activities employ four hundred
12 full-time employees annually and one thousand two hundred
13 seasonal employees; and

14 WHEREAS, Navajo agricultural products industry's future
15 projects include continued crop diversification and a food
16 processing plant that would include modern storage and
17 processing facilities to accommodate customer packaging
18 preferences and peak market demands with concomitant benefits
19 to the Four Corners economy; and

20 WHEREAS, Navajo agricultural products industry relies on
21 water provided by the Navajo Indian irrigation project to
22 cultivate about eighty thousand acres, but because the overall
23 completion schedule for the project has been delayed by at
24 least twenty-five years, Navajo agricultural products industry
25 is unable to cultivate its remaining thirty thousand acres; and

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