

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT, THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY TO PROVIDE CRITICAL ASSISTANCE TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARMS AND COMPANIES THAT GROW, PROCESS, SELL AND SERVE NEW MEXICO CHILE PEPPERS AND NEW MEXICO CHILE PEPPER PRODUCTS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is recognized for having the best-tasting chile in the United States; and

WHEREAS, New Mexicans take great pride in New Mexico chile as a culinary treasure; and

WHEREAS, chile is recognized as the state vegetable, and "red or green?" is the state question; and

WHEREAS, chile is to New Mexico what the potato is to Idaho and the orange is to Florida; and

WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico chile association, chile pepper production provides approximately four thousand full- and part-time jobs and contributes about three hundred million dollars (\$300,000,000) annually to the New Mexico economy; and

WHEREAS, the chile industry is a home-grown, largely rural industry that has existed in New Mexico's Rio Grande valley and Pecos valley and in other areas in New Mexico for over four centuries; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's chile acreage has declined significantly to approximately one-third of what it was at its peak in 1992, according to the national agricultural statistics service; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2009 survey conducted by research and polling, incorporated, ninety-two percent of New Mexico chile consumers are concerned about the decline in chile acreage throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, about eighty percent of the chile consumed in the United States is foreign grown and imported, according to *Western Farm Press*, with chile primarily coming from Mexico, Peru, China and India; and

WHEREAS, the research and polling, incorporated, survey reports that seventy-three percent of respondents say it is very important to them that the chile they purchase be grown in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the same survey indicates that ninety percent of New Mexico chile consumers agree that officials should do everything in their power to ensure that chile continues to be processed and grown in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, foreign competitors have captured much of New Mexico's market share of chile products because of their advantageous regulatory environment and their plentiful, low-cost labor; and

WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico chile association,

while consumption of chile is skyrocketing in the United States, New Mexico's production of chile is in steep decline; and

WHEREAS, the farmers and producers who comprise the New Mexico chile industry must regain their competitiveness in order to retake their share of the growing market for chile peppers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the economic development department, the tourism department, the New Mexico department of agriculture and New Mexico state university be requested to provide critical assistance to encourage the development of farms and companies that grow, process, sell and serve New Mexico chile peppers and New Mexico chile pepper products; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the parties provide an assessment of the future viability of the New Mexico chile industry and report and make recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of economic development, the secretary of tourism, the director of the New Mexico department of agriculture and the board of regents of New Mexico state university.