

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING NEW MEXICO'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO REQUEST THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A WORK GROUP OF THE APPROPRIATE WATER, LAND AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROACTIVE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SAN JUAN-CHAMA PROJECT IN SOUTHERN COLORADO.

WHEREAS, the San Juan-Chama project provides water for domestic and agricultural use for a majority of the population within central New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the federal bureau of reclamation notified San Juan-Chama project water users in December 2012 that they could see a twenty percent reduction in water due to depleted reserves in Heron lake and reduced flows diverted from the Rio Blanco, Navajo and Little Navajo rivers in southern Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the United States forest service and the United States geological survey recently issued reports that addressed the likelihood of increased size and frequencies of wildfires, decreased water yields, decreased precipitation and higher temperatures; and

WHEREAS, the United States bureau of reclamation, in

conjunction with the city of Santa Fe hydrologist, issued a joint report in November 2012 that acknowledged that experts agree on profound negative impacts from higher temperatures, less water flow from reduced snowpack and more fires with probable flooding; and

WHEREAS, continued drought and reduced winter snowpack could mean reduced flows through the San Juan-Chama project and within the watersheds originating in national forests throughout New Mexico, with a resultant increased risk of forest fire danger in Colorado and New Mexico watersheds as more trees die; and

WHEREAS, probable ash and mud flows with debris after forest fires may damage and obstruct the series of tunnels and diversions that make up the San Juan-Chama project or reduce the capacity or obstruct the operations of Heron lake, El Vado lake, Abiquiu lake and Cochiti lake, all of which can hold San Juan-Chama project water, which happened in recent flood damage at Dixon orchard, Bandelier national monument and Santa Clara canyon after the Las Conchas fire; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico governor's drought task force recently reported that surveys of water storage reservoirs throughout New Mexico, including Santa Rosa lake, Sumner lake, Heron lake, El Vado lake and Elephant Butte lake, show that water levels are significantly low; and

WHEREAS, the agricultural industry and major cities

within New Mexico are at potential risk due to such stark conditions, therefore potentially further damaging the state's economy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico congressional delegation be requested to request the United States department of the interior and the United States department of agriculture to establish a work group of the appropriate water, land and emergency management agencies of the state of New Mexico and the United States, including the office of the state engineer, the interstate stream commission, the energy, minerals and natural resources department, the homeland security and emergency management department and the San Juan-Chama project contractors, to:

A. evaluate the potential risk to the San Juan-Chama project diversion, conveyance and storage facilities from wildfire and flood damage; and

B. develop and implement best management practices to reduce and eliminate those risks prior to forest fire, flooding or other disruptions in the watersheds; and

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