

1 HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 24

2 **51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING NEW MEXICO'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO REQUEST THE
12 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND THE UNITED STATES
13 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A WORK GROUP OF THE
14 APPROPRIATE WATER, LAND AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES OF
15 THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES TO DEVELOP AND
16 IMPLEMENT PROACTIVE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO MAINTAIN AND
17 PRESERVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SAN JUAN-CHAMA PROJECT IN
18 SOUTHERN COLORADO AND ALL WATERSHEDS ON FEDERAL LANDS IN NEW
19 MEXICO PRIOR TO ANY POTENTIAL FOREST FIRE AND RESULTANT DEBRIS
20 FLOW AND FLOODING.

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

25 WHEREAS, the federal bureau of reclamation notified San

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1 Juan-Chama project water users in December 2012 that they could
2 see a twenty percent reduction in water due to depleted
3 reserves in Heron lake and reduced flows diverted from the Rio
4 Blanco, Navajo and Little Navajo rivers in southern Colorado;
5 and

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

11 WHEREAS, the United States bureau of reclamation, in
12 conjunction with the city of Santa Fe hydrologist, issued a
13 joint report in November 2012 that acknowledged that experts
14 agree on profound negative impacts from higher temperatures,
15 less water flow from reduced snowpack and more fires with
16 probable flooding; and

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

23 WHEREAS, probable ash and mud flows with debris after
24 forest fires may damage and obstruct the series of tunnels and
25 diversions that make up the San Juan-Chama project or reduce

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1 the capacity or obstruct the operations of Heron lake, El Vado
2 lake, Abiquiu lake and Cochiti lake, all of which can hold San
3 Juan-Chama project water, which happened in recent flood damage
4 at Dixon orchard, Bandelier national monument and Santa Clara
5 canyon after the Las Conchas fire; and

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

11 WHEREAS, the agricultural industry and major cities within
12 New Mexico are at potential risk due to such stark conditions,
13 therefore potentially further damaging the state's economy;

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

25 A. evaluate the potential risk to the San Juan-

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1 Chama project diversion, conveyance and storage facilities from
2 wildfire and flood damage;

3 B. evaluate the risk from wildfire and flood damage
4 to all watersheds originating on federal lands within New
5 Mexico that provide domestic and agricultural water sources for
6 the people of New Mexico; and

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

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