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HOUSE MEMORIAL 99

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

INTRODUCED BY

Larry A. Larrañaga

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO CONVENE A WORK GROUP TO PREPARE A REPORT ON THE HISTORICAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE OF THE RIO ABAJO VALLEY AND THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES IN THE VALLEY, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP THE AREA.

WHEREAS, the lower Rio Grande river valley, known as the Rio Abajo valley, is a rich geographic part of the state, stretching from Algodones, New Mexico, to south of Belen and including communities in and around Mountainair, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Rio Abajo valley has historically provided, and continues to provide, significant contributions to the state's history, culture, commerce and scientific communities and has been overlooked as a corridor of particular

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1 significance in the state; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico towns and cities in the Rio Abajo  
3 valley offer important historical and cultural features in  
4 communities that are otherwise struggling to survive; and

5 WHEREAS, the Rio Abajo valley communities of Socorro,  
6 Belen, Tome, Los Lunas, Los Padillas, Peralta, Armijo, Atrisco,  
7 Barelvas, Old Albuquerque, Los Ranchos, Alameda, Bernalillo and  
8 Algodones were crucial to historical agricultural production in  
9 New Mexico; and

10 WHEREAS, famous routes such as El Camino Real, the  
11 Turquoise Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, the Salt Mission Trail,  
12 the Enchanted Circle, United States Route 66 and the Jornada  
13 del Muerto, now known as El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro,  
14 traverse the "Land of Enchantment", and several of the routes  
15 run through the Rio Abajo valley; and

16 WHEREAS, New Mexico's landscape, and specifically the Rio  
17 Abajo valley, is regarded by Native Americans and others as  
18 sacred land; and

19 WHEREAS, much has been documented about the history,  
20 mystery, myths and miracles of Spain's venerable Maria de Jesus  
21 de Agreda, also known as the "Blue Nun", and her influence on  
22 the ancient Jumano and Isleta peoples and other early New  
23 Mexicans, particularly those who lived in the Rio Abajo valley;  
24 and

25 WHEREAS, pilgrimages to New Mexico are made to visit

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1 cultural, historical and religious sites in the state,  
2 including sites near Mountainair, New Mexico, such as the  
3 ancient pueblo villages of Abo, Gran Quivira and Quarai; at  
4 Salinas Pueblo Missions national monument; and

5 WHEREAS, recent pilgrimages to the Rio Abajo valley have  
6 been made, and future pilgrimages are planned, in honor of the  
7 Blue Nun, whose influence in and around the Salinas Pueblo  
8 Missions national monument is felt and acknowledged by many to  
9 this day; and

10 WHEREAS, other national and state monuments and  
11 significant sites, including El Camino Real international  
12 heritage center and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro national  
13 historic trail, are located in and around the Rio Abajo valley;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, pilgrimages and tourism in and around the Rio  
16 Abajo valley are helping to establish international  
17 relationships and to foster friendships and economic exchange  
18 at many levels, highlighting the historical, cultural,  
19 commercial and scientific importance of the Rio Abajo valley;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, the people of New Mexico benefit when  
22 communities, organizations and governmental bodies and agencies  
23 are provided with support for community development, research,  
24 public education, programs related to local history and  
25 culture, and economic and social stabilization; and

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1           WHEREAS, areas in the Rio Abajo valley have great economic  
2 potential and are primed for development; and

3           WHEREAS, economic revival of the Rio Abajo valley can and  
4 should be fostered through the application of available  
5 resources to enhance commerce and tourism in the area, as well  
6 as through international, national and statewide promotion of  
7 this culturally and historically significant area of the state;

8           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
9 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico  
10 legislative council be requested to convene a work group to  
11 prepare a report on the importance of the Rio Abajo valley and  
12 the needs of the communities within the Rio Abajo valley,  
13 including recommendations on how to support the development and  
14 promotion of the valley's historical, cultural, commercial and  
15 scientific attributes; and

16           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group consist of at  
17 least one representative each from:

- 18           A. the economic development department;  
19           B. the cultural affairs department;  
20           C. the tourism department; and  
21           D. the New Mexico institute of mining and  
22 technology, the university of New Mexico and New Mexico state  
23 university, from within a department emphasizing history,  
24 archaeology, anthropology, culture, agribusiness or the  
25 sciences; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group be requested to  
2 present its report and recommendations to the interim economic  
3 and rural development committee by October 1, 2013; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
5 transmitted to the secretaries of economic development,  
6 cultural affairs and tourism and to the presidents of the New  
7 Mexico institute of mining and technology, university of New  
8 Mexico and New Mexico state university.

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