

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2015, "NEW MEXICO FOOD AND FARMS DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a vibrant food and farming culture that is significant to rural economies and provides employment opportunities on farms; in direct wholesale and retail opportunities; and in food processing, distribution and value-added businesses; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that for every one dollar (\$1.00) that goes to local agricultural producers, one dollar eighty cents (\$1.80) is circulated in the local economy; and

WHEREAS, if every New Mexico consumer purchased only fifteen percent of the consumer's food from the state's farmers and ranchers, it would increase annual farm income by three hundred ninety-two million dollars (\$392,000,000); and

WHEREAS, seventy-five farmers' markets are serving New Mexico produce to thirty-six thousand people per week in thirty-one counties; and

WHEREAS, farmers' markets support New Mexico's economic and nutritional health, and food access programs such as the supplemental nutrition assistance program, the women, infants and children special supplemental nutrition program and senior farmers' market nutrition programs to create more than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in annual fresh food sales

to small farmers; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, New Mexico farmers' markets had annual gross sales of eight million four hundred seventy thousand dollars (\$8,470,000); and

WHEREAS, currently, more than twenty-five New Mexico farmers sell to more than sixty school districts serving more than two hundred forty thousand schoolchildren New Mexico-grown fruits and vegetables, enhancing the diets of schoolchildren, promoting healthier lifestyles and increasing academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, current state funds of three hundred three thousand dollars (\$303,000) have been awarded to thirty school food authorities specifically to purchase New Mexico-grown produce for school meals; and

WHEREAS, an investment in children's health will help stem the rise in childhood obesity in New Mexico, where thirty-two percent of children are overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, a healthier population will help to save the state an additional three hundred twenty-four million dollars (\$324,000,000) in obesity-related health care expenses and an additional one billion two hundred million dollars (\$1,200,000,000) for diabetes treatment; and

WHEREAS, increased investment from the state legislature enables schools to feature New Mexico-grown produce and meet federal nutrition requirements, serve more fresh fruits and

vegetables to New Mexico children and support economic development opportunities for local farmers, entrepreneurs and communities; and

WHEREAS, capital outlay projects and general appropriations are means by which to expand New Mexico produce markets, food hubs and community kitchens; and

WHEREAS, creating food hubs, produce processing and distribution centers and community kitchens can accelerate the growth of farmers and rural entrepreneurs; and

WHEREAS, the number of New Mexico's community and school gardens is growing, and they provide an important way for children and families to engage in growing food and a way for children to learn about nutrition and life sciences; and

WHEREAS, to achieve this goal, programs such as FoodCorps, whose volunteers devote a year of their lives to local communities, served over nineteen thousand New Mexico students, have built or expanded forty-six school and community garden projects, donated over two thousand pounds of garden produce, engaged close to one thousand four hundred community volunteers and reached students throughout New Mexico;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Wednesday, January 28, 2015, be declared "New Mexico Food and Farms Day" in the house of representatives as acknowledgment that the

time has come to invest in New Mexico's children, economy and future by supporting farmers, farmers' markets and food entrepreneurs and by encouraging public schools and others to continue and expand the purchase of New Mexico-grown fruits and vegetables; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the New Mexico food and agriculture policy council, the New Mexico department of agriculture and the public education department.