

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT WORK WITH TRIBAL LEADERS AND THE TRIBAL INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD TO DEDICATE ONE YEAR OF TRIBAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT FUND MONEY TO ASSESS AND ADDRESS THE MOST CRITICAL NEEDS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION OF TRIBAL LIBRARY FACILITIES.

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries must compete for tribal revenues often earmarked for infrastructure such as roads, sewer and water lines, irrigation systems, emergency response systems, adequate medical facilities and communications systems, which are often lacking in tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, today, many tribal public libraries exist in older, unsafe and inadequate buildings that were not designed for library use, nor do they have the capacity to deliver up-to-date technologies and services such as reliable high-speed connectivity for ease of use and security; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries positively impact the quality of life of tribal members by providing free services such as online learning, financial literacy workshops, digital literacy training, homework help, early literacy and after-school activities and library programs to tribal communities, many of which are located in rural, impoverished areas of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries are unique community

centers that connect students, scholars and community members to the world of information by providing access to resources that are relevant to tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, tribal public libraries serve people of all ages in their respective communities and are centrally located in tribal communities, serving not only as informational resource centers but also as cultural information centers that play a vital role in language and cultural preservation; and

WHEREAS, many tribal public libraries lack the space to create computer laboratories, greatly limiting the provision of information literacy, job readiness and technology training that would support economic development in the communities; and

WHEREAS, the Native American population in New Mexico has high unemployment and poverty rates with low educational attainment and poor availability of essential services, with access to technology and connectivity in tribal libraries being the essential source of educational and health resources and job and career information, since every aspect of access is technologically driven;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the Indian affairs department be requested to work with tribal leaders and the tribal infrastructure board to dedicate one year of tribal infrastructure project fund money to assess and address

the most critical needs for construction and renovation of tribal library facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of cultural affairs, the secretary of Indian affairs, the governor and the appropriate interim legislative committees.