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HOUSE MEMORIAL 65

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017

INTRODUCED BY

George Dodge, Jr. and Debbie A. Rodella

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 16, 2017 AS "ACEQUIA DAY" IN THE NEW MEXICO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACEQUIAS TO THE HISTORY, CULTURE, ECONOMY AND MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, for generations, acequias have supported a way of life centered around local agriculture and customs of sharing water; and

WHEREAS, acequias are a centuries-old form of water governance in New Mexico that have created a cultural landscape with a web of waterways that nurture tens of thousands of acres of farmland; and

WHEREAS, acequia customs and traditions regarding agriculture, seed saving, irrigation practices and food preservation are important aspects of the cultural heritage of

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1 New Mexico; and

2 WHEREAS, acequias contribute to the well-being and
3 livelihood of thousands of families who generate income from
4 farming and ranching, thereby supporting diversification of New
5 Mexico's economy through local food production; and

6 WHEREAS, acequias and community ditches number over seven
7 hundred in New Mexico with each one governed, operated and
8 maintained by elected commissioners and mayordomos; and

9 WHEREAS, the role of acequias in local governance has been
10 affirmed by laws enacted by the state of New Mexico recognizing
11 acequias as political subdivisions and enabling acequias to
12 have important powers in local water management; and

13 WHEREAS, for the past fifty years, acequias have come
14 together to protect and defend water rights, advocate for water
15 policies strengthening acequia governance and support funding
16 programs for acequia infrastructure; and

17 WHEREAS, the New Mexico acequia association was
18 established in 1989 to advocate for water policy beneficial to
19 acequias, and the New Mexico acequia commission was created in
20 statute in 1993 to serve as an advisory body in state
21 government; and

22 WHEREAS, hydrological studies by the New Mexico water
23 resources research institute at New Mexico state university
24 have documented hydrological benefits of acequias, including
25 aquifer recharge through earthen ditches; and

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