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SENATE MEMORIAL 81

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

INTRODUCED BY

Carlos R. Cisneros

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 16, 2017 AS "ACEQUIA DAY" IN THE NEW MEXICO SENATE; 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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