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HOUSE MEMORIAL 12

55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2021

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING
2021 AS THE "INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CAVES AND KARST".

WHEREAS, caves and related landforms like sinkholes,
springs and sinking streams, collectively known as karst,
present some of the world's most dramatic landscapes; and

WHEREAS, caves and karst have diverse economic, ecologic,
scientific and cultural impacts around New Mexico, the United
States and the world; and

WHEREAS, Carlsbad Caverns national park alone has an
economic benefit of about thirty-four million dollars
(\$34,000,000) each year for New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, other New Mexico cave tourist destinations
include Bottomless Lakes state park, Santa Rosa blue hole, the
ice cave and Bandera volcano and El Malpais national monument;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, the country's first underground wilderness was
3 established in New Mexico to protect the spectacular
4 Lechuguilla cave; and

5 WHEREAS, the country's first underground national
6 conservation area was established in New Mexico to protect the
7 equally amazing Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave national
8 conservation area; and

9 WHEREAS, the primary water supplies for roughly fifteen
10 percent of New Mexico are karst aquifers, especially supporting
11 the communities in the southeast quadrant of the state; and

12 WHEREAS, recognizing New Mexico's significance and
13 interest in the area, the United States congress established
14 the national cave and karst research institute, located in New
15 Mexico in partnership with the state and under the
16 administration of the New Mexico institute of mining and
17 technology; and

18 WHEREAS, insect-eating bats from New Mexico's caves and
19 around the country save American agriculture twenty-three
20 billion dollars (\$23,000,000,000) each year in pesticides; and

21 WHEREAS, globally, bats help produce more than four
22 hundred fifty foods, medicines and industrial products, in
23 addition to other benefits; and

24 WHEREAS, caves in New Mexico and worldwide are the main
25 repositories of thousands of years of rich cultural history

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1 found nowhere else; and

2 WHEREAS, karst and related pseudokarst areas are
3 landscapes that make up twenty-five percent of the United
4 States and about twenty percent of the planet's land surface;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, while cave and karst areas have multiple
7 benefits, they also pose many challenges, as their aquifers are
8 easily contaminated and drained, and sinkholes alone cause over
9 three hundred million dollars (\$300,000,000) in road damage in
10 the United States each year; and

11 WHEREAS, through the national cave and karst research
12 institute, the New Mexico institute of mining and technology
13 and their partners, New Mexico is taking the lead in
14 sustainably maximizing the benefits of caves and karst, while
15 reducing adverse impacts, through research and education
16 programs; and

17 WHEREAS, in recognition of the many benefits and
18 challenges provided by caves and karst in the areas where they
19 occur, the international union of speleology is spearheading
20 the celebration of 2021 as the international year of caves and
21 karst;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
23 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the governor be
24 requested to acknowledge the importance of caves and karst in
25 New Mexico by issuing a proclamation recognizing 2021 as the

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1 "International Year of Caves and Karst"; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
3 transmitted to the governor and the executive director of the
4 national cave and karst research institute.

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