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SENATE MEMORIAL 22

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

INTRODUCED BY

Brenda McKenna

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO APPOINT A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE USE
OF PESTICIDES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ON PUBLIC SCHOOL GROUNDS AND
ON PUBLIC LAND THAT IS USED BY OR NEAR WHERE THE PUBLIC
RECREATES OR OTHERWISE USES THE LAND AND TO REPORT FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS ON ECOLOGICAL PEST MANAGEMENT AND THE NEED TO
ELIMINATE OR LIMIT THE USE OF DANGEROUS OR TOXIC PESTICIDES
THAT ARE HARMFUL TO HUMANS AND ANIMALS.

WHEREAS, pesticides are used in homes, in other buildings
and in the environment to prevent, destroy, repel or mitigate
insects, rodents, fungi, weeds, bacteria and other
microorganisms that have a deleterious effect on humans,
animals and plants; and

WHEREAS, it is no exaggeration to say that pesticides have

1 saved millions of lives through the eradication of many insect-
2 or rodent-carried diseases or in saving and increasing crop
3 yields; and

4 WHEREAS, while modern pesticides may be efficient in
5 controlling or destroying pests, some of these laboratory-
6 created poisons may also harm or kill farm workers, children,
7 pets and wildlife; and

8 WHEREAS, two of the most common pesticides, glyphosate and
9 clorpyrifos, have been in the news in the last few years
10 because overwhelming scientific evidence points to their danger
11 to humans; and

12 WHEREAS, children are more susceptible to hazardous
13 impacts from pesticides than adults and have "critical windows
14 of vulnerability" whereby even small amounts of pesticide
15 exposure can result in significant health effects, including
16 neurotoxicity and death; and

17 WHEREAS, pesticides can be harmful to wildlife, including
18 threatened and endangered species, soil microbiology and
19 natural ecosystems, and toxic runoff from chemical fertilizers
20 and pesticides pollutes streams, lakes and drinking water
21 sources; and

22 WHEREAS, the federal environmental protection agency has
23 recommended the use of a pest management system that emphasizes
24 nonchemical approaches to pest control, particularly in areas
25 in which children are present, such as parks and school

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1 grounds; and

2 WHEREAS, ecological land and building management practices
3 that emphasize organic methods of pest prevention and
4 management can eliminate the use of and exposure to pesticides
5 while controlling pest populations; and

6 WHEREAS, toxic pesticides should only be used in a
7 designated emergency situation after other options have been
8 attempted and exhausted and there is an imminent threat to
9 public health; and

10 WHEREAS, the people of New Mexico have a fundamental right
11 to know about the use of pesticides where children learn and
12 play and families gather to enjoy the outdoors;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
14 OF NEW MEXICO that the department of environment and the public
15 education department be requested to appoint a task force to
16 study the use of pesticides in public schools and on public
17 school grounds and on state and local public land that is used
18 for outdoor recreation or exercise, street medians, public
19 rights of way or other public property that is used by or is
20 near property used by the public; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include
22 representatives of state and local governments, public schools,
23 indoor and outdoor pesticide applicators, acequia and ditch
24 associations, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, wildlife experts,
25 public health officials or researchers, health care providers

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1 and the public; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to
3 consider the efficacy of ecological pest management, including
4 benefits and drawbacks, for both indoor and outdoor use; the
5 health effects of certain classes or categories of pesticides;
6 and under what circumstances dangerous or toxic pesticide use
7 should be allowed in public school buildings, on school grounds
8 or on or near land used by the public; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its
10 findings and recommendations by November 1, 2021 to the
11 governor, the legislature and appropriate local government
12 officials; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
14 transmitted to the secretary of environment, the secretary of
15 public education and the New Mexico municipal league and the
16 New Mexico association of counties for distribution to local
17 government officials.