

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 55

43RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 1998

INTRODUCED BY

G. X. McSHERRY

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATE AND CONGRESS TO
MAKE THE MORE THAN ONE BILLION DOLLARS (\$1,000,000,000) OF
FEDERAL MONEY IN THE ABANDONED MINE LAND TRUST FUND ALREADY
EARMARKED FOR ABANDONED MINE RECLAMATION AVAILABLE TO STATES.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has an estimated thirteen thousand
hazardous mine openings, sixty-nine miles of degraded streams
and more than thirty thousand acres of land that have been
adversely affected by previous mining activities; and

WHEREAS, numerous personal injuries, deaths, property
damages and environmental concerns have resulted from early
mining activities; and

WHEREAS, the mining and minerals division of the energy,
minerals and natural resources department estimates it will
cost more than three hundred million dollars (\$300,000,000) to

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1 reclaim and restore these abandoned mine lands; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico now receives only about one million
3 five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) a year from the
4 federal government for abandoned mine land reclamation
5 projects; and

6 WHEREAS, there is now a balance of more than one billion
7 dollars (\$1,000,000,000) in the federal abandoned mine
8 reclamation trust fund that is set aside by law to take care
9 of lands adversely affected by early coal mining activities;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, New Mexico is the thirteenth largest coal
12 producing state in the nation, and coal operators contribute
13 significantly to the fund by paying a special fee for each ton
14 of coal they mine; and

15 WHEREAS, New Mexico coal mine operators paid more than
16 five million four hundred thousand dollars (\$5,400,000) in
17 special coal mining fees in 1997; and

18 WHEREAS, the unappropriated federal abandoned mine
19 reclamation trust fund balance is increasing at the rate of
20 more than one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) per year;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, New Mexico has a seventeen-year record of
23 reclamation success in administering the abandoned mine land
24 program; and

25 WHEREAS, New Mexico's current undistributed state share

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1 of the federal abandoned mine reclamation trust fund is more
2 than twelve million dollars (\$12,000,000); and

3 WHEREAS, New Mexico has been working with the western
4 governors' association, the western interstate energy board,
5 the national association of abandoned mine land programs,
6 Indian tribes and other states to free more of these funds to
7 safeguard and reclaim abandoned mine lands; and

8 WHEREAS, making more funds available to states for
9 abandoned mine reclamation should preserve the interest
10 revenues now being made available for the united mine workers
11 combined benefit fund; and

12 WHEREAS, the federal office of surface mining, the United
13 States environmental protection agency and congress have not
14 agreed to make more funds available to states for abandoned
15 mine reclamation;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the president of United States and
18 congress be urged to make the more than one billion dollars
19 (\$1,000,000,000) of federal money already earmarked for
20 abandoned mine land reclamation available to states to reclaim
21 and make safe our abandoned mine lands; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
23 transmitted to the president of the United States, the
24 presiding officers of each house of congress and all other
25 members of congress.

1 FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE

2 SECOND SESSION, 1998

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6 February 11, 1998

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8 Mr. Speaker:

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10 Your ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, to
11 whom has been referred

12
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15 has had it under consideration and reports same with
16 recommendation that it DO PASS, amended as follows:

17 1. On page 1, line 11, after "UNITED", strike "STATE" and
18 insert in lieu thereof "STATES".,

19
20 and thence referred to the APPROPRIATIONS & FINANCE
21 COMMITTEE.

FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
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Respectfully submitted,

James Roger Madalena, Chairman

Adopted _____

Not Adopted _____

(Chief Clerk)

(Chief Clerk)

Date _____

The roll call vote was 9 For 0 Against

Yes: 9

Excused: None

Absent: Getty, Knowles, Salazar

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February 17, 1998

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Mr. President:

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Your CONSERVATION COMMITTEE, to whom has been referred

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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 55, as amended

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has had it under consideration and reports same with
recommendation that it DO PASS.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Michael S. Sanchez, Chairman

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2

Adopted _____ Not

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Adopted _____

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(Chief Clerk)

(Chief Clerk)

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Date _____

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10

The roll call vote was 7 For 0 Against

11

Yes: 7

12

No: None

13

Excused: Eisenstadt, Kysar, Payne

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Absent: None

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