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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 26

44TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 1999

INTRODUCED BY

Bobbie K. Mallory

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND CONGRESS TO
MAKE THE MORE THAN ONE BILLION FOUR HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS
(\$1, 400, 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

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1 cost more than three hundred million dollars (\$300,000,000) to
2 reclaim and restore these abandoned mine lands; and

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

7 WHEREAS, there is now a balance of more than one billion
8 four hundred million dollars (\$1,400,000,000) in the federal
9 abandoned mine reclamation trust fund that is set aside by law
10 to take care of lands adversely affected by early coal mining
11 activities; and

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

16 WHEREAS, New Mexico coal mine operators paid more than
17 five million five hundred thousand dollars (\$5,500,000) in
18 special coal mining fees in 1998; and

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

23 WHEREAS, New Mexico has an eighteen-year record of
24 reclamation success in administering the abandoned mine land
25 program; and

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1 WHEREAS, New Mexico's current undistributed state share
2 of the federal abandoned mine reclamation trust fund is more
3 than thirteen million four hundred thousand dollars
4 (\$13,400,000); and

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

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

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

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
19 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the president of the United States
20 and congress be urged to make the more than one billion four
21 hundred million dollars (\$1,400,000,000) of federal money
22 already earmarked for abandoned mine land reclamation
23 available to states to reclaim and make safe our abandoned
24 mine lands; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

1 transmitted to the president of the United States, the
2 presiding officers of each house of congress and all other
3 members of congress.

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1 FORTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE
2 FIRST SESSION, 1999
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6 February 12, 1999
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8 Mr. Speaker:
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10 Your ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, to
11 whom has been referred
12

13 HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 26
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15 has had it under consideration and reports same with
16 recommendation that it DO PASS.

17 Respectfully submitted,
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21 _____
22 James Roger Madalena, Chair man
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FORTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION, 1999

Page 6

Adopted _____ Not Adopted _____

(Chief Clerk)

(Chief Clerk)

Date _____

The roll call vote was 8 For 0 Against

Yes: 8

Excused: Kissner, Roberts

Absent: None

J: \99BillSWP\HJ026

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