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HOUSE MEMORIAL 42

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP PROPOSALS FOR RULES AND LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE METHANE EMISSIONS FROM NEW MEXICO'S REGULATED UTILITIES.

WHEREAS, methane is responsible for one-third of net global warming since the industrial revolution and is approximately eighty times more powerful than carbon dioxide at warming the atmosphere over a twenty-year period; and

WHEREAS, methane accounts for seventeen percent of global greenhouse gas emissions from human activities, and reducing methane emissions that result from the operations of regulated utilities has enormous potential for targeted mitigation by 2030; and

WHEREAS, at a recent United Nations climate change

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1 conference, one hundred fifty-five countries, including the
2 United States, pledged to work together to collectively reduce
3 global anthropogenic methane emissions across all sectors by at
4 least thirty percent below 2020 levels by 2030; and

5 WHEREAS, New Mexico's regulated utilities frequently
6 purchase fuel from New Mexico's natural gas industry for the
7 utilities' own use and for delivery to their customers; and

8 WHEREAS, achieving upstream reductions in methane
9 emissions caused by the production, transportation and
10 marketing of natural gas purchased by New Mexico's regulated
11 utilities will have a significant impact in reducing methane
12 emissions from the operations of New Mexico's regulated
13 utilities; and

14 WHEREAS, proven technologies and practices could reduce
15 greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas industry by as
16 much as two hundred million tons per year, or as much as forty-
17 five percent, by 2030, and most of these technical solutions
18 can be implemented at a negative or low cost, especially in the
19 oil and gas sector; and

20 WHEREAS, because methane has a short atmospheric lifetime,
21 the benefits of mitigation quickly materialize and slow the
22 rate of atmospheric warming, which would help limit dangerous
23 climate feedback loops, such as the melting of the polar ice
24 caps and sea level rise, while simultaneously delivering
25 important health, environmental and economic benefits from

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1 reducing ground-level ozone; and

2 WHEREAS, the oil and gas sector has the greatest share of
3 ready-to-implement and cost-effective technical opportunities
4 to reduce methane emissions; and

5 WHEREAS, appropriate regulatory frameworks are needed to
6 mitigate methane emissions relating to the production,
7 transportation and marketing of natural gas purchased by New
8 Mexico's regulated utilities;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
10 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department
11 of environment be requested to convene a working group of state
12 experts and stakeholders to develop proposals for rules and
13 legislative recommendations that aim to reduce methane
14 emissions relating to the production, transportation and
15 marketing of natural gas purchased by New Mexico's regulated
16 utilities; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group develop
18 proposals for rules, rate recovery mechanisms and legislative
19 recommendations that will encourage New Mexico's regulated
20 utilities to purchase fuels with the lowest possible amount of
21 associated methane emissions; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be requested
23 to commence its work on or before April 1, 2024, meet no fewer
24 than five times prior to October 1, 2024 and present proposals
25 for rules and legislative recommendations to the appropriate

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1 interim legislative committee dealing with natural resources
2 and regulated utilities prior to November 1, 2024; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
4 transmitted to the governor, the secretary of energy, minerals
5 and natural resources, the secretary of environment, the
6 secretary of economic development, the chief of staff of the
7 public regulation commission and the appropriate interim
8 legislative committee dealing with natural resources and
9 regulated utilities no later than April 1, 2024.