

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 20

**51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013**

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT, THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY TO PROVIDE CRITICAL ASSISTANCE TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARMS AND COMPANIES THAT GROW, PROCESS, SELL AND SERVE NEW MEXICO CHILE PEPPERS AND NEW MEXICO CHILE PEPPER PRODUCTS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is recognized for having the best-tasting chile in the United States; and

WHEREAS, New Mexicans take great pride in New Mexico chile as a culinary treasure; and

WHEREAS, chile is recognized as the state vegetable, and "red or green?" is the state question; and

WHEREAS, chile is to New Mexico what the potato is to Idaho and the orange is to Florida; and

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1           WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico chile association,  
2 chile pepper production provides approximately four thousand  
3 full- and part-time jobs and contributes about three hundred  
4 million dollars (\$300,000,000) annually to the New Mexico  
5 economy; and

6           WHEREAS, the chile industry is a home-grown, largely rural  
7 industry that has existed in New Mexico's Rio Grande valley and  
8 Pecos valley and in other areas in New Mexico for over four  
9 centuries; and

10          WHEREAS, New Mexico's chile acreage has declined  
11 significantly to approximately one-third of what it was at its  
12 peak in 1992, according to the national agricultural statistics  
13 service; and

14          WHEREAS, according to a 2009 survey conducted by research  
15 and polling, incorporated, ninety-two percent of New Mexico  
16 chile consumers are concerned about the decline in chile  
17 acreage throughout the state; and

18          WHEREAS, about eighty percent of the chile consumed in the  
19 United States is foreign grown and imported, according to  
20 *Western Farm Press*, with chile primarily coming from Mexico,  
21 Peru, China and India; and

22          WHEREAS, the research and polling, incorporated, survey  
23 reports that seventy-three percent of respondents say it is  
24 very important to them that the chile they purchase be grown in  
25 New Mexico; and

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1           WHEREAS, the same survey indicates that ninety percent of  
2 New Mexico chile consumers agree that officials should do  
3 everything in their power to ensure that chile continues to be  
4 processed and grown in New Mexico; and

5           WHEREAS, foreign competitors have captured much of New  
6 Mexico's market share of chile products because of their  
7 advantageous regulatory environment and their plentiful,  
8 low-cost labor; and

9           WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico chile association,  
10 while consumption of chile is skyrocketing in the United  
11 States, New Mexico's production of chile is in steep decline;  
12 and

13           WHEREAS, the farmers and producers who comprise the New  
14 Mexico chile industry must regain their competitiveness in  
15 order to retake their share of the growing market for chile  
16 peppers;

17           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
18 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the economic development department,  
19 the tourism department, the New Mexico department of  
20 agriculture and New Mexico state university be requested to  
21 provide critical assistance to encourage the development of  
22 farms and companies that grow, process, sell and serve New  
23 Mexico chile peppers and New Mexico chile pepper products; and

24           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the parties provide an  
25 assessment of the future viability of the New Mexico chile

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1 industry and report and make recommendations to the appropriate  
2 interim legislative committees; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
4 transmitted to the secretary of economic development, the  
5 secretary of tourism, the director of the New Mexico department  
6 of agriculture and the board of regents of New Mexico state  
7 university.