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HOUSE MEMORIAL 56

51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2014

INTRODUCED BY

Sandra D. Jeff

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING KEY AGENCIES TO FORM A WORK GROUP TO STUDY THE
CONDITION OF COUNTY-MAINTAINED BRIDGES IN MCKINLEY COUNTY;
REQUESTING THE WORK GROUP TO CREATE A COOPERATIVE WORK PLAN TO
ADDRESS THE SERIOUS DETERIORATION OF THOSE BRIDGES THAT PRESENT
AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF DANGER TO THE RESIDENTS OF MCKINLEY
COUNTY AND ESPECIALLY TO ITS SCHOOLCHILDREN WHO MUST TRAVEL
OVER THOSE BRIDGES TO ATTEND SCHOOL; REQUESTING THE WORK GROUP
TO IDENTIFY SOURCES OF FUNDING TO ACCOMPLISH THE WORK PLAN AND
TO REPORT THE WORK PLAN TO THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, McKinley county is responsible for the
maintenance of five hundred forty-nine miles of roads and
forty-eight bridges; and

WHEREAS, most of these bridges are Korean war-era "Bailey"
bridges that were purchased by McKinley county as surplus from
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1 the United States military in the last century; and

2 WHEREAS, forty-five of these bridges are rated so poorly
3 by the department of transportation that they are unsafe for
4 fire trucks and rescue vehicles and, except for one of these
5 forty-five bridges, unsafe for school buses; and

6 WHEREAS, in August 2013, the Gallup-McKinley county school
7 district ordered its school buses not to use these forty-four
8 bridges; and

9 WHEREAS, some of these bridges are not on county-
10 maintained roads but are on roads maintained by the federal
11 bureau of Indian affairs within the borders of the Navajo
12 Nation; and

13 WHEREAS, in many cases, the county does not own the rights
14 of way for the bridges but only has an implied easement to
15 maintain the bridges at their current level of repair; and

16 WHEREAS, before these bridges can be fixed or replaced,
17 the United States army corps of engineers must approve the
18 plans or designs as part of its duty to protect waters of the
19 United States, and the Navajo Nation must permit the repair or
20 replacement of some of these bridges under an implied easement;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, the inspection and analysis costs for each
23 failing bridge is estimated by the road department of McKinley
24 county to be between one hundred fifty thousand dollars
25 (\$150,000) and two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000);

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, the remediation or replacement cost for each
3 bridge is estimated to be between one million dollars
4 (\$1,000,000) and two million dollars (\$2,000,000); and

5 WHEREAS, school buses that previously used these bridges
6 now drop schoolchildren before a bridge and then turn around,
7 while the children must walk across the bridge and on to their
8 final destination; and

9 WHEREAS, some sources of funds for county roads and
10 bridges come from the local governments road fund administered
11 by the department of transportation and from the public school
12 capital outlay council;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
14 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that McKinley
15 county, the Gallup-McKinley county school district, the
16 department of transportation, the Navajo regional office of the
17 bureau of Indian affairs, the Navajo division of
18 transportation, the Albuquerque district of the United States
19 army corps of engineers and the public school capital outlay
20 council be requested to form a work group, with McKinley county
21 taking the lead, to study the current conditions and provide
22 proposals for repair or replacement of bridges in McKinley
23 county that are on school bus routes, including:

24 A. a recommended work plan to determine the actual
25 cost of a full analysis of the condition of failing bridges and

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1 a time line for that analysis;

2 B. recommended strategies for the repair or
3 replacement of failing bridges;

4 C. identification, assessment and recommendation of
5 potential funding sources to conduct the analysis and to
6 accomplish repair or replacement of those bridges to meet legal
7 standards for emergency vehicles and school buses; and

8 D. recommendations for immediate and interim
9 actions to address the situation of schoolchildren being
10 dropped off at failing bridges prior to their final
11 destinations; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a written report of the work
13 group's study, work plan, strategies and recommendations be
14 submitted to the appropriate legislative interim committees,
15 the legislative finance committee and the governor; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
17 transmitted to the chair of the McKinley county board of
18 commissioners, the director of the Navajo region of the bureau
19 of Indian affairs, the secretary of transportation, the
20 commanding officer of the Albuquerque district of the United
21 States army corps of engineers, the director of the Navajo
22 division of transportation, the superintendent of the Gallup-
23 McKinley county school district, the chair of the public school
24 capital outlay council and the director of the northwest New
25 Mexico council of governments.

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