

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM FOR RECLAMATION OF ABANDONED URANIUM MINES IN NEW MEXICO AND TO KEEP NEW MEXICO'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION APPRISED OF ISSUES RELATED TO THE LEGACY OF ABANDONED URANIUM MINES AND FUNDING NEEDS FOR RECLAMATION.

WHEREAS, when the United States atomic energy commission created the domestic uranium procurement program in the 1950s, many companies and individuals in New Mexico responded to the need for uranium to fuel the federal government's defense requirements for nuclear weapons; and

WHEREAS, a uranium mining industry was created almost overnight in New Mexico, which became the largest uranium-producing state in the nation, with over three hundred eighty million pounds produced for the nuclear weapons program; and

WHEREAS, the domestic uranium procurement program was very successful and resulted in the operation of numerous mines throughout New Mexico, mainly in Cibola and McKinley counties; and

WHEREAS, the domestic uranium procurement program met its production goals in the mid-1980s and most of the small company and individual mine sites were abandoned with little or no reclamation, as there were no standards or requirements

for reclamation at that time; and

WHEREAS, these uranium sites make up a legacy of abandoned mines in New Mexico and few of these sites have been reclaimed since the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's response to the federal government's call for uranium to supply its nuclear program greatly assisted America's national defense effort; and

WHEREAS, the support of the federal government is now needed to help secure funding to reclaim these sites and resolve the nearly fifty-year legacy left behind in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the mining and minerals division of the energy, minerals and natural resources department has identified approximately two hundred fifty legacy sites on private and public land where there is record of uranium production; and

WHEREAS, the division has surveyed the majority of these sites to prioritize them based on potential environmental risk factors in the mostly remote areas where the sites exist;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the mining and minerals division of the energy, minerals and natural resources department be requested to continue its important work and to develop a program to identify the specific steps necessary to begin reclaiming the surveyed abandoned uranium sites, including an efficient method for estimating

reclamation costs when federal or other funding becomes available for this purpose; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the mining and minerals division of the energy, minerals and natural resources department also be requested to keep New Mexico's congressional delegation apprised of issues related to the legacy of abandoned uranium mines in New Mexico, the results of the surveyed sites and the need for funding to begin reclamation of the sites; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to New Mexico's congressional delegation, the governor and the secretary of energy, minerals and natural resources.