

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 4

2 **52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2016**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 AFFIRMING THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION; REQUESTING  
12 THE DECLARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WEEK AND  
13 REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH LEAD A STUDY  
14 FOR A GRANT PROGRAM TO INCREASE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION  
15 OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS.

16  
17 WHEREAS, New Mexico has a rich cultural history of  
18 environmental stewardship, which should be continued into the  
19 future; and

20 WHEREAS, environmental education provides an effective  
21 means to teach common core state standards and next generation  
22 science standards, and environmental education increases  
23 student achievement in all fields of study; and

24 WHEREAS, environmental education provides a theme for  
25 interdisciplinary, project- and place-based learning that

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1 enhances critical thinking skills, promotes student engagement  
2 in learning and creates a stronger connection to the land of  
3 New Mexico; and

4 WHEREAS, much of environmental education content falls  
5 squarely into the subjects of science, technology, engineering  
6 and mathematics, each of which provides a high-priority focus  
7 for education; and

8 WHEREAS, a growing body of research and literature  
9 indicates that being in nature is increasingly important for  
10 children, especially for children raised in highly  
11 industrialized urban environments; and

12 WHEREAS, outdoor education has been shown to increase  
13 student focus and reduce symptoms of attention deficit disorder  
14 and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; and

15 WHEREAS, school gardens and wildlife habitats provide  
16 school-based laboratories for science education and other  
17 studies and generate greater community support for school  
18 sites; and

19 WHEREAS, growing food at school increases nutritional  
20 knowledge, promotes a healthful lifestyle and reduces childhood  
21 obesity; and

22 WHEREAS, the New Mexico environmental literacy plan was  
23 developed by more than three hundred teachers and non-formal  
24 educators to provide guidelines for teaching quality  
25 environmental education both inside the classroom and out of

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1 doors; and

2 WHEREAS, environmental education leads to an  
3 environmentally literate citizenry that makes sound and  
4 effective decisions in a range of contexts and situations;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the importance of environmental  
7 education that contributes to the education, health and  
8 responsible behavior of New Mexicans be affirmed by the  
9 legislature; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor be requested to  
11 declare a week in April "Environmental Education Week" and to  
12 encourage all kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers to  
13 teach their students outdoors for at least one hour that week  
14 and encourage state agencies to celebrate environmental  
15 education through existing programs; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of game and  
17 fish as lead agency and in cooperation with the state parks  
18 division and the forestry division of the energy, minerals and  
19 natural resources department; the state land office; the  
20 department of health; the public education department; and the  
21 children, youth and families department be requested to study  
22 the feasibility of creating an environmental education grant  
23 program to increase opportunities for environmental education  
24 for New Mexico students and be requested to report back to the  
25 appropriate interim committees by November 1, 2016; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education  
2 department be requested to provide a link on its website to the  
3 New Mexico environmental literacy plan as a resource for  
4 teachers; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
6 transmitted to the governor; the state parks division and the  
7 forestry division of the energy, minerals and natural resources  
8 department; the department of game and fish; the state land  
9 office; the department of health; the public education  
10 department; and the children, youth and families department.