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HOUSE MEMORIAL 61

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018

INTRODUCED BY

George Dodge, Jr.

A MEMORIAL

ENCOURAGING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO PROTECT PROGRAMS VITAL TO NEW MEXICO'S ECONOMY AND TO NEW MEXICO FAMILIES FUNDED BY THE 2018 FEDERAL FARM BILL.

WHEREAS, New Mexico's agrarian roots are thousands of years old, and for the last five hundred years, diverse cultures have cultivated and been sustained by farming and ranching; and

WHEREAS, today, the New Mexico agriculture sector provides food, fiber and fuel to consumers around the globe; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico agriculture sector is one of the state's principal economic drivers, with a total output valued at more than three billion dollars (\$3,000,000,000) annually, in addition to directly supporting more than twenty-three thousand jobs; and

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1 WHEREAS, as requested by a 2017 house memorial, the New
2 Mexico state university cooperative extension service and New
3 Mexico first developed the resilience in New Mexico agriculture
4 strategic plan, in order to systematically address the
5 unprecedented issues facing the agriculture sector; and

6 WHEREAS, after thirteen regional meetings, task force
7 deliberations and public comment, the resilience in New Mexico
8 agriculture strategic plan recommends strategies to achieve
9 greater agricultural and natural resources resiliency, as well
10 as a secure future for the generations of farmers and ranchers
11 to come; and

12 WHEREAS, imperative to New Mexico agriculture's resilience
13 and New Mexico's economic vitality is a broad array of food and
14 development programs, administered by the United States
15 department of agriculture, through the federal Agricultural Act
16 of 2014, known as "the farm bill", authorized by the United
17 States congress approximately every five years; and

18 WHEREAS, congress is considering legislative action for
19 the 2018 federal farm bill; and

20 WHEREAS, the resilience in New Mexico agriculture task
21 force believes that the federal farm bill is vital to New
22 Mexico and to the health, safety and well-being of its
23 communities and of its residents, as well as to the goals and
24 strategies of the working group; and

25 WHEREAS, New Mexico has long been the "chile capital of

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1 the world", and New Mexico has become the seventh-highest
2 milk-producing state and one of the top three pecan-producing
3 states in the nation; and

4 WHEREAS, dairy farmers and other commodity growers must
5 navigate risks not faced by other private businesses in New
6 Mexico, and the federal farm bill enables the farm credit
7 system to provide disaster assistance, crop insurance, margin
8 protection and other risk-management tools that provide an
9 income safety net; and

10 WHEREAS, New Mexico has the second-highest acreage in
11 enrollment in the conservation stewardship program, and the
12 federal farm bill contributed nearly forty million dollars
13 (\$40,000,000) in 2016 to farmers' and ranchers' voluntary
14 conservation initiatives to prevent soil erosion, preserve and
15 restore wetlands, clean the air and water and enhance wildlife;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, in 2016, New Mexico shared with other states part
18 of two hundred forty-three million dollars (\$243,000,000)
19 authorized for export initiatives, such as the market access
20 program and foreign market development program; and

21 WHEREAS, the federal farm bill provides food assistance
22 and nutrition education to families and enables low-income
23 children and seniors to access fresh, healthy foods through
24 programs like the supplemental nutrition assistance program;
25 and

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1 WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2016, the supplemental nutrition
2 assistance program provided about six hundred ninety million
3 dollars (\$690,000,000) in food benefits to a monthly average of
4 more than four hundred seventy-one thousand New Mexicans,
5 creating a multiplier effect of one dollar eighty cents (\$1.80)
6 for every one dollar (\$1.00) invested in the supplemental
7 nutrition assistance program; and

8 WHEREAS, thanks to the federal farm bill, the United
9 States department of agriculture rural development invested
10 more than seven hundred million dollars (\$700,000,000) from
11 2009 to 2015 to stimulate job and economic growth in New
12 Mexico's rural and tribal areas; and

13 WHEREAS, federal-farm-bill-funded research and extension
14 programs delivered by New Mexico state university empower large
15 and small agricultural operations to compete with and
16 outperform farmers in other countries by being more efficient,
17 more innovative and more productive with limited resources; and

18 WHEREAS, farmers and ranchers have a vested interest in
19 seeing New Mexico's forests flourishing, and the federal farm
20 bill provides tools to mitigate wildfires, manage public access
21 and protect livestock; and

22 WHEREAS, agriculture has played a critical role in
23 increasing the availability of home-grown and renewable energy
24 sources, making New Mexico a leader in energy development, and
25 the federal farm bill will further advance the adoption of new

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1 technologies by farmers and ranchers; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico is proud to be a significant specialty
3 crop-producing state, made possible through the federal farm
4 bill, which supports producers' efforts to enhance specialty
5 crops through the specialty crop block grant program, as well
6 as efforts to detect and eradicate invasive pests; and

7 WHEREAS, farm service agency loan guarantees and financing
8 programs, supported by the federal farm bill, make farming and
9 value-added agricultural operations accessible to tribal
10 members, beginners, minorities, women and urban producers, in
11 addition to enabling farms and ranches to be transferred to the
12 next generation;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
14 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico
15 congressional delegation be strongly encouraged to protect New
16 Mexico's interests, as they relate to the 2018 federal farm
17 bill, to provide income stability for farmers and ranchers, to
18 support next-generation farmers and ranchers, to protect land
19 and natural resources, to open and ensure access to global
20 markets, to empower rural and tribal communities and to help
21 New Mexico families access nutritious foods; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
23 transmitted to members of the New Mexico congressional
24 delegation.