

HOUSE MEMORIAL 24

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026

## INTRODUCED BY

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## A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE GUADALUPE HIDALGO TREATY DIVISION OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE LAND GRANT COUNCIL TO STUDY THE  
POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF RESTRUCTURING THE LAS VEGAS LAND  
GRANT.

WHEREAS, the Las Vegas land grant is uniquely situated as the only land grant in the state that is managed, controlled and administered by a district court; and

WHEREAS, ownership of the land comprising the Las Vegas land grant was disputed after the land was conveyed to several different grantees by the Mexican government between 1821 and 1835, resulting in several competing claims for this land before United States occupation; and

WHEREAS, after occupation by the United States government in 1846, individuals outside of the land grant entered the

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1 land, recognized the ambiguity of its legal ownership and  
2 pursued various court actions that resulted in the Las Vegas  
3 land grant being managed by the district court of San Miguel  
4 county, as opposed to heirs or occupants of the land grant; and

5 WHEREAS, many argue that these conditions stripped land  
6 grant members, heirs and occupants of the Las Vegas land grant  
7 of the ability to self-govern and participate in the democratic  
8 process; and

9 WHEREAS, the provisions directing the district court of  
10 San Miguel county to manage and appoint the board of trustees  
11 for the Las Vegas land grant were enacted in 1903 and are  
12 currently codified in Chapter 49, Article 6 NMSA 1978; and

13 WHEREAS, these provisions vest jurisdiction with the  
14 district court of San Miguel county to manage, control and  
15 administer the Las Vegas land grant and direct the court to  
16 appoint the board of trustees, oversee the board and promulgate  
17 rules for the board to manage the land grant and conduct  
18 business; and

19 WHEREAS, despite these legal requirements, the fourth  
20 judicial district court, the court that currently occupies this  
21 role, has expressed confusion in this role due to its peculiar  
22 nature and lack of guidance as to how to perform these duties;  
23 and

24 WHEREAS, the fourth judicial district court and Las Vegas  
25 land grant members agree that this form of governance should be

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altered; however, given the historically fraught nature of this situation, further study is needed to evaluate and consider the potential consequences that could result from making these changes to New Mexico law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the Guadalupe  
Hidalgo treaty division of the department of justice and the  
land grant council be requested to study the potential  
consequences that could ensue from changes to Chapter 49,  
Article 6 NMSA 1978 divesting management and appointment  
authority from the fourth judicial district court and  
restructuring the governance of the Las Vegas land grant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of justice and the land grant council be requested to report findings and conclusions responsive to this request to the appropriate legislative committees that address issues impacting land grants and rural communities by December 1, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the director of the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty division of the department of justice, the chair of the land grant council, the president of the board of trustees of the Las Vegas land grant and the chief judge of the fourth judicial district court.