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SENATE MEMORIAL 13

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

INTRODUCED BY

Leo Jaramillo and Anita Gonzales and Antonio Maestas

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

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

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

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