

**44TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION,
2000**

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON CONCERNS OF THE
HANDICAPPED TO STUDY THE HOUSING NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH
MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES AND TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO MEET
THOSE NEEDS.

WHEREAS, lack of adequate housing is consistently
identified as the number one problem for people with multiple
chemical sensitivities; and

WHEREAS, many individuals with multiple chemical
sensitivities are homeless during the course of their
illness, forced to live outdoors or under substandard
conditions due to their illness; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for both short-term and long-
term housing, as well as emergency shelter for such
individuals; and

WHEREAS, people with multiple chemical sensitivities are

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1 often denied adequate housing due to the presence of chemical
2 barriers or subtle or overt discrimination; and

3 WHEREAS, the presence of chemicals found in most paints,
4 plywood, particle board, pesticides, new carpeting and many
5 maintenance and cleaning products blocks access for people
6 with multiple chemical sensitivities just as physical
7 barriers block access for people who use wheelchairs; and

8 WHEREAS, multiple chemical sensitivities is recognized
9 as a potentially disabling condition by the federal social
10 security administration and the United States department of
11 housing and urban development and is covered under the
12 federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the
13 federal Fair Housing Act; and

14 WHEREAS, the department of health has determined that
15 sixteen percent of the general population and twenty-seven
16 percent of Native Americans in New Mexico report being
17 chemically sensitive and two percent of the population has
18 been diagnosed with multiple chemical sensitivities; and

19 WHEREAS, educating housing providers about the needs of
20 people with multiple chemical sensitivities, using less toxic
21 materials for housing construction and remodeling and
22 increasing flexibility in zoning regulations, building codes,
23 shelter rules and other common housing-related practices and
24 conditions would significantly increase housing and shelter
25 opportunities for people with multiple chemical
sensitivities; and

WHEREAS, affordable and accessible housing would help

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1 people with multiple chemical sensitivities stabilize and
2 improve their health and increase their ability to continue
3 or return to employment; and

4 WHEREAS, increasing the availability of affordable, less
5 toxic housing would also benefit the general population,
6 especially those with asthma, chronic lung disease or other
7 respiratory illnesses, infants, children, the elderly,
8 pregnant women and Native Americans;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
10 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the governor's committee on concerns
11 of the handicapped, together with the New Mexico mortgage
12 finance authority and other appropriate state agencies, study
13 ways in which the state can help provide housing and shelter
14 for people with multiple chemical sensitivities; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study address issues of
16 affordability, zoning, building materials, maintenance and
17 cleaning products and practices, indoor and outdoor air
18 quality and barriers to the use of community housing
19 programs; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify barriers
21 to housing and shelter for people with multiple chemical
22 sensitivities and propose solutions to eliminate or reduce
23 those barriers, including consideration of building code
24 variances; zoning exemptions; education of builders,
25 architects and housing providers; supplemental housing
subsidies; and extension of visiting time limitations in
state parks; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor's committee on
2 concerns of the handicapped report the findings to the
3 legislative health and human services committee at its
4 October 2000 meeting; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
6 transmitted to the governor's committee on concerns of the
7 handicapped, the New Mexico mortgage finance authority and
8 the legislative health and human services committee.

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