

A JOINT MEMORIAL

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REQUESTING THE STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT TO DIRECT ITS EFFORTS AND FEDERAL FUNDING TOWARD MAKING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRAFFIC SAFER AND CREATING SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has the nation's highest pedestrian fatality rate; and  
WHEREAS, New Mexico has the nation's sixth highest bicyclist fatality rate; and  
WHEREAS, children who walk and ride bicycles are among the groups that are

more at risk from unsafe streets; and

WHEREAS, many of New Mexico's communities lack sidewalks, bicycle paths, street crossings or other elements necessary to provide safe routes to schools; and

WHEREAS, the federal government provides millions of dollars to New Mexico through the federal surface transportation program and the federal hazard elimination program to pay for non-construction costs aimed at reducing injuries and deaths from motor vehicle accidents and to resolve safety problems at hazardous locations and roads that constitute a danger to motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists; and

WHEREAS, decreases in fatalities among pedestrians and bicyclists are more often attributable to students walking and riding bicycles less and riding in cars more often; and

WHEREAS, the surgeon general observed that seventy-eight percent of children are not active enough; one in five children is overweight or at risk of becoming overweight; and one in three teenagers is overweight or at risk of becoming overweight; and

WHEREAS, safer routes to school can provide the ability to increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic to help students get more regular exercise;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state highway and transportation department be requested to direct more of its efforts and federal funding on improving bicycle and pedestrian access and on traffic-calming projects in school zones rather than simply

1 building and widening intersections; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state highway and transportation  
3 department work with its bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian committee, with school  
4 districts and law enforcement agencies and with parents, teachers and school  
5 administrators to develop innovative programs and initiatives to create safe routes to  
6 school; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state highway and transportation  
8 department present its findings and recommendations to the appropriate interim  
9 legislative committee by October 30, 2003; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the  
11 state highway and transportation department.

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