

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 68

2 47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2006

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ACEQUIA CULTURE WITHIN THE STATE
12 OF NEW MEXICO AND RECOMMENDING THAT AN ACEQUIA HOLIDAY BE
13 DECLARED THE THIRD FRIDAY OF EVERY APRIL.

14
15 WHEREAS, the historic role of acequias in New Mexico has
16 been significant and impressive, and the acequia can be
17 accurately described as the birthplace of a community; and

18 WHEREAS, after more than four centuries, the acequias have
19 withstood the test of time, making them the oldest water
20 management institutions in the United States, with strong
21 historical ties to the even more ancient systems of medieval
22 Europe and northern Africa; and

23 WHEREAS, currently, over one thousand acequias imprinting
24 the rural landscapes of New Mexico have survived virtually
25 intact through a succession of political, legal and

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1 administrative changes during Spanish, Mexican, territorial and
2 statehood periods, and the acequia has been the main force
3 establishing the distinct place and boundaries of communities;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, acequias are self-governing institutions and have
6 continuously performed essential services for the communities
7 that they founded, enabling agricultural production, sustaining
8 popular participation, promoting income distribution and equity
9 and protecting watershed resources; and

10 WHEREAS, technological, economic, demographic and social
11 changes have produced pressures and uncertainties beyond the
12 acequias' control; and

13 WHEREAS, the traditional system of common property placed
14 a value on a set of communal rights and responsibilities that
15 has been challenged by another value system that views acequia
16 water rights as a commodity, putting at risk the acequias both
17 as physical watercourses and as democratic institutions for
18 local water management; and

19 WHEREAS, the annual cleaning of the acequia was and still
20 is one of the most important events in New Mexico communities,
21 and the cleaning of the acequia not only marks the beginning of
22 the agricultural season, it is also an occasion for the vecinos
23 to address other local issues, reconfirming the sense of
24 tradition that undergirds the social and political life of the
25 community; and

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