

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE AND NATIVE SEEDS TO NEW MEXICO'S CULTURAL HERITAGE AND FOOD SECURITY.

WHEREAS, the ability to grow food is the culmination of countless generations of sowing and harvesting seeds, which are an inheritance passed hand to hand from our ancestors to us and to our children and grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's native foods and crops are the result of the intermixing of Mesoamerican, pueblo, tribal and Hispano cultures that created a unique and diverse indigenous agricultural system and land-based culture; and

WHEREAS, traditional agricultural systems and native seeds provide the basis for local food production in acequia, pueblo and tribal communities, represent the foundation for local food security and contribute to the health and well-being of our communities; and

WHEREAS, in recent reports, New Mexico has been ranked as having one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the country, indicating that the ability to produce locally grown food is in need of dramatic improvement; and

WHEREAS, strengthening local agriculture and indigenous agricultural practices is a vital strategy for strengthening food security at the local and state levels and also enables

pueblo, tribal and acequia communities to produce food that is culturally and spiritually meaningful; and

WHEREAS, traditional agriculture and seed-saving is part of a culture characterized by communities and families coming together for communal work such as cleaning acequias and preparing fields as well as for ceremony, prayers and blessings, thereby binding our communities, traditions and cultures together; and

WHEREAS, traditional farmers from tribal, pueblo and acequia communities have expressed concern about genetic engineering and patenting of seeds as a threat to their cultural and spiritual connection to the earth, as a violation of their rights to save seeds and grow food and as a theft of cultural property; and

WHEREAS, traditional farmers from pueblo and acequia communities have come together for a ceremonial seed exchange and a declaration of seed sovereignty between the traditional Native American farmers association and the New Mexico acequia association; and

WHEREAS, since the signing of that declaration, resolutions in support of seed sovereignty have been passed by the Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque, the eight northern Indian pueblos council, the all Indian pueblo council and the national congress of American Indians; and

WHEREAS, the traditional Native American farmers'

association and the New Mexico acequia association have formed the New Mexico food and seed sovereignty alliance and are seeking support for several objectives, including the following:

A. protecting native seeds from genetic contamination;

B. increasing the extent of the cultivation of native seeds and the raising of small herds of livestock in pueblos and acequia communities;

C. supporting the livelihood of traditional farmers and ranchers with financial and educational resources, leading to improved viability of farming; and

D. increasing the extent to which locally grown food is served within the same community in which it is grown, particularly by tribal, public and community institutions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the house of representatives recognize the significance of native seeds to the cultural heritage and food security of New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the house of representatives support the efforts of the New Mexico food and seed sovereignty alliance to prevent genetic contamination of native seeds, strengthen small-scale agriculture and increase the cultivation of native crops in their communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico department of

agriculture be requested to collaborate with the New Mexico food and seed sovereignty alliance in supporting traditional farmers in their communities, protecting native seeds and increasing the cultivation of native seeds by developing specific policy recommendations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor, the board of regents of New Mexico state university and the dean of the college of agriculture and home economics at New Mexico state university and the secretary of Indian affairs.