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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 54

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007

INTRODUCED BY

Joni Marie Gutierrez

A JOINT MEMORIAL

DECLARING PLUTO A PLANET AND DECLARING MARCH 13, 2007, "PLUTO PLANET DAY" AT THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the state of New Mexico is a global center for astronomy, astrophysics and planetary science; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is home to world class astronomical observing facilities, such as the Apache Point observatory, the very large array, the Magdalena Ridge observatory and the national solar observatory; and

WHEREAS, Apache Point observatory, operated by New Mexico state university, houses the astrophysical research consortium's three-and-one-half meter telescope, as well as the unique two-and-one-half meter diameter Sloan digital sky survey telescope; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico state university has the state's only

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1 independent, doctorate-granting astronomy department; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico state university and Dona Ana county
3 were the longtime home of Clyde Tombaugh, discoverer of Pluto;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Pluto has been recognized as a planet for
6 seventy-five years; and

7 WHEREAS, Pluto's average orbit is three billion six
8 hundred ninety-five million nine hundred fifty thousand miles
9 from the sun, and its diameter is approximately one thousand
10 four hundred twenty-one miles; and

11 WHEREAS, Pluto has three moons known as Charon, Nix and
12 Hydra; and

13 WHEREAS, a spacecraft called new horizons was launched in
14 January 2006 to explore Pluto in the year 2015;

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
16 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that, as Pluto passes overhead through New
17 Mexico's excellent night skies, it be declared a planet and
18 that March 13, 2007 be declared "Pluto Planet Day" at the
19 legislature.