1	HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 2
2	48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2008
3	INTRODUCED BY
4	John Pena
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8	FOR THE INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
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10	A JOINT MEMORIAL
11	REQUESTING STATE AGENCIES TO STUDY THE NECESSITY FOR AND
12	FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A STATE SUPERFUND PROGRAM FOR THE
13	CLEANUP OF URANIUM-CONTAMINATED SITES IN NEW MEXICO.
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15	WHEREAS, beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, private
16	companies began extensive exploration, mining and milling
17	activities related to the uranium deposits located in the
18	Grants mineral belt in northwestern New Mexico on private,
19	state, federal and tribal lands; and
20	WHEREAS, these activities continued through the 1990s,
21	resulting in the mining and milling in excess of one hundred
22	seventy-five thousand tons of uranium ore from lands located in
23	New Mexico; and
24	WHEREAS, hundreds of abandoned, unremediated uranium mines
25	exist in communities in northwestern New Mexico, and scores of

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Native American and non-Native American families still live in close proximity to those abandoned, unremediated mine sites; and

WHEREAS, unremediated contamination resulting from past uranium exploration, mining and milling activities constitutes a continuing threat to the health and well-being of residents of northwestern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, state and federal studies have repeatedly shown that surface water, ground water and soils were and remain irreversibly contaminated by past uranium mining and milling activities and that livestock that grazed in the mining areas were found to have hazardous levels of radioactive materials in their edible organs and muscle; and

WHEREAS, contamination from the northeast Church Rock uranium mine site abandoned in 1979 was left unremediated for more than twenty years before the United States environmental protection agency commenced cleanup activities in 2007; and

WHEREAS, other sites in New Mexico that pose a threat to the health and well-being of New Mexicans and that should be remediated are unlikely to be remediated through the United States environmental protection agency "superfund" program because they rank too low on the priority scale in comparison to other superfund sites throughout the country, in part because the number of persons affected by the New Mexico sites is relatively small;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the energy, minerals and natural resources department, the department of environment and the department of health be requested to undertake jointly an inventory of the location of sites in New Mexico that have been contaminated by uranium exploration, mining and milling 7 activities and the extent of contamination at each of those 8 sites, including an assessment of potential short- and long-9 term harm to humans, and to make recommendations regarding the 10 feasibility of establishing a state "superfund" program to undertake or accelerate the cleanup of sites posing threats to 12 human health and possible means of funding such cleanup 13 activities: and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the energy, minerals and natural resources department, the department of environment and the department of health jointly present their findings and recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committees by September 1, 2008; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor; the secretary of energy, minerals and natural resources; the secretary of environment; the secretary of health; the president of the Navajo Nation; the speaker of the Navajo Nation council; the governor of the Pueblo of Acoma; and the governor of the Pueblo of Laguna.

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