

1 A MEMORIAL

2 SUPPORTING THE IDEA THAT EVERY NEW MEXICO CHILD SHOULD HAVE
3 AMPLE OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES USING EXISTING RESOURCES.

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5 WHEREAS, New Mexico is a state rich in diverse natural
6 resources and wildlife as well as outstanding natural areas
7 that provide residents with a wide variety of outdoor
8 recreation opportunities; and

9 WHEREAS, a growing body of research and literature
10 indicates that being in nature is increasingly important for
11 children, especially for children raised in highly
12 industrialized urban environments; and

13 WHEREAS, outdoor activity in natural environments has
14 the potential to improve children's mental health and
15 physical well-being or, in the words of one student, "we need
16 to get more air and oxygen, which fuels our bodies and helps
17 us think"; and

18 WHEREAS, an increase in outdoor school activities can
19 increase student attendance, focus, enthusiasm for school and
20 academic performance and reduce negative behaviors; and

21 WHEREAS, outdoor activities can reduce obesity and
22 diabetes in New Mexico where one-third of our children are
23 overweight and where diabetes rates jumped forty percent from
24 1990 through 2000; and

25 WHEREAS, teens and young adults have one of the highest

1 rates of unemployment and would benefit from volunteer and
2 other job training opportunities in outdoor and natural
3 resources fields; and

4 WHEREAS, taking care of natural resources and forming
5 good stewardship habits at an early age are important aspects
6 of learning to care for the world around us and to work for
7 positive change; and

8 WHEREAS, the wonder and joy of discovery in nature is a
9 fundamental childhood experience and promotes mental and
10 physical health, academic achievement, future economic
11 success, civic engagement and environmental literacy;

12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
13 LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it support the
14 idea that every New Mexico child should have the opportunity
15 to:

- 16 A. play outside and explore freely;
- 17 B. watch wildlife in the outdoors;
- 18 C. wade in a river, creek, lake or pond;
- 19 D. catch a fish and hunt for food;
- 20 E. camp out under the stars;
- 21 F. plant a seed and visit farms and ranches;
- 22 G. hike a trail;
- 23 H. explore public parks, open spaces, nature
24 centers and wildlife sanctuaries;
- 25 I. actively care for land, water and wildlife;

1 J. dig in the dirt and learn about the world from
2 the ground up; and

3 K. use their imaginations to draw, dance, sing and
4 play outdoors; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the children, youth and
6 families department, the state parks division of the energy,
7 minerals and natural resources department, the department of
8 game and fish, the public education department, the state
9 land office, the tourism department and the department of
10 health be encouraged to develop and advertise outdoor
11 programs for children, including opportunities on New Mexico
12 state-owned lands, activities in and around schools such as
13 outdoor gardening and increased physical education and
14 outdoor and natural resource job and skills training; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
16 transmitted to the governor, the children, youth and families
17 department, the state parks division of the energy, minerals
18 and natural resources department, the department of game and
19 fish, the public education department, the state land office,
20 the tourism department and the department of health. _____

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