

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH HOLD A WORKSHOP TO IDENTIFY FUTURE PROJECTS AND FUNDING TO HELP REDUCE WILDLIFE-VEHICLE COLLISIONS; REQUESTING THAT THE GOVERNOR DECLARE A WILDLIFE SAFETY AWARENESS DAY.

WHEREAS, in 2011, the New Mexico legislature passed House Joint Memorial 10, which requested that the department of transportation, the department of game and fish and New Mexico state police work together to create a traffic safety pilot project to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions; and

WHEREAS, the pilot project, which includes tree and shrub trimming and the installation of traffic signs and flashing lights, is underway on United States route 64 near Chama, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, roads, such as United States route 64, often run through areas that wildlife has used for thousands of years, and the competition for space poses a significant problem for wildlife on the move, especially large animals such as deer, elk, bear, pronghorn antelope and mountain lions; and

WHEREAS, wildlife safety zones that incorporate measures such as reduced speed limits, trimmed vegetation, flashing traffic lights, traffic signs and increased fines for traffic

violations, can increase driver awareness and help protect humans and wildlife from unnecessary and brutal injury or death; and

WHEREAS, reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions will, in turn, reduce the number of collision-related deaths and injuries sustained by people and wildlife, the number of valuable state game animals lost to collisions and the cost of collision-related medical care, vehicle repair and insurance; and

WHEREAS, in Colorado, Idaho, Florida, California, Pennsylvania, Washington and Arizona, wildlife safety zones have proven to reduce collisions and save the lives of people and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the most current information on where and how often wildlife-vehicle collisions occur in New Mexico was developed at a 2003 critical mass workshop and that information needs to be updated; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that more than half of all collisions between vehicles and large animals are unreported; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico youth would like the issue of wildlife-vehicle collisions resolved so future generations of children will have the pleasure of seeing wildlife in its natural habitat rather than only in zoos or dead on New Mexico roads;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of transportation and the department of game and fish be requested to use existing resources to work with the university of New Mexico division of government research to hold a 2013 critical mass workshop by June 30, 2013 in order to help collect and map current data showing where wildlife-vehicle collisions occur in New Mexico and to produce a list of road segments in New Mexico that have the greatest number of wildlife-vehicle collisions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the departments be requested to send a joint report on the 2013 critical mass workshop and follow-up activities to the appropriate legislative interim committee by October 1, 2013; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the departments be requested to apply for funding from the New Mexico highway safety improvement program for use in establishing additional wildlife safety zones along New Mexico roads; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the departments be requested to assess the possibility of establishing a citizen road-monitoring program to help the departments collect data in the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor be requested to issue a proclamation declaring a wildlife safety awareness day to promote reduced driving speeds for the safety of drivers

and wildlife; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor, the department of transportation, the department of game and fish and the New Mexico state police division of the department of public safety.