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HOUSE MEMORIAL 1

51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

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

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

6 WHEREAS, wildlife safety zones that incorporate measures
7 such as reduced speed limits, trimmed vegetation, flashing
8 traffic lights, traffic signs and increased fines for traffic
9 violations, can increase driver awareness and help protect
10 humans and wildlife from unnecessary and brutal injury or
11 death; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the departments be requested
24 to apply for funding from the New Mexico highway safety
25 improvement program for use in establishing additional wildlife

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1 safety zones along New Mexico roads; and

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

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

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