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SENATE MEMORIAL 52

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

INTRODUCED BY

Phil A. Griego

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE TO ASSIST LOCAL PARTNERS TO AGGRESSIVELY TREAT THE GALLINAS WATERSHED AND IMPLEMENT EVERY ATTEMPT TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF A CATASTROPHIC FIRE AND TO PREPARE FOR POST-FIRE INCIDENTS.

WHEREAS, existing conditions within the Gallinas watershed, which provides the principal source of water for the city of Las Vegas, require that the board of county commissioners act urgently and call for federal assistance enabling local partners to increase mitigation measures in the areas of the watershed identified to be most susceptible to catastrophic fire; and

WHEREAS, if drought conditions persist into the future, it is critical to begin planning for post-fire situations and water supply treatment facilities and methods that may help to

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1 ensure the delivery of potable water to the residents within
2 San Miguel county; and

3 WHEREAS, without federal partnerships and federal
4 financial assistance to increase forest fire mitigation
5 applications in this watershed, the potential for destruction
6 of the upper two-thirds of the watershed managed solely by the
7 United States forest service and the resulting termination of a
8 surface water supply source for a county of twenty-nine
9 thousand three hundred ninety-three residents would be
10 catastrophic; and

11 WHEREAS, it is necessary to identify and implement
12 hazardous-fuel-reduction treatments on United States forest
13 service properties, perform outreach efforts to create public
14 awareness of the existing fire danger and implement post-
15 catastrophic forest fire treatments to ensure that this
16 vulnerable watershed is protected against destruction; and

17 WHEREAS, the existing conditions threaten the health,
18 safety and welfare of the residents of San Miguel county and
19 worsening conditions and the failure to act now will only
20 increase the potential for catastrophic fire in this critical
21 area and for the destruction of a surface water supply serving
22 a municipal water system of five thousand customers;

23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
24 OF NEW MEXICO that the United States forest service be
25 requested to perform a review of the area and its conditions,

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1 commit to funding a management, planning and implementation
2 partnership and provide financial assistance to local partners
3 to aggressively treat the Gallinas watershed and implement
4 every attempt to minimize the impact of a catastrophic fire and
5 prepare for post-fire incidents; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States forest
7 service be requested to involve all local partners that have an
8 interest in protecting the Gallinas watershed and the surface
9 water supply delivered from this natural drainage system; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
11 transmitted to the secretary of the United States department of
12 agriculture, the chief of the United States forest service and
13 the New Mexico congressional delegation.