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SENATE MEMORIAL 93

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

INTRODUCED BY

William E. Sharer

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND  
APPROPRIATE INTERIM COMMITTEES EXAMINE THE IDEA OF TRANSFERRING  
FEDERAL LANDS TO NEW MEXICO AND THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC  
LANDS PURSUE THE TRANSFER OF FEDERAL DISPOSAL LANDS.

WHEREAS, eighty-five percent of the brain's architecture  
is set up in the first few years of life, resulting in early  
childhood being an important developmental phase; and

WHEREAS, brain and biological development during the first  
years of life is highly influenced by environment, and early  
experiences may determine health, education, economic and  
social participation for the rest of a person's life; and

WHEREAS, achievement gaps begin extremely early and  
persist. Science has shown that achievement gaps that exist  
between children in poverty and their more economically

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1 advantaged peers are evident as early as eighteen months; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico has many at-risk youth, given that one  
3 in four children lives in poverty; and New Mexico has the  
4 second-highest teen birth rate in the nation, four in ten teens  
5 do not complete high school and only one in four adults ages  
6 eighteen to sixty-four has a high school diploma or general  
7 educational development diploma; and

8 WHEREAS, kids who start behind in school tend to stay  
9 behind, an achievement gap that multiplies over time. To break  
10 this cycle, it is important to focus on children when they are  
11 very young; and

12 WHEREAS, the social and financial costs to New Mexico and  
13 the United States for failed potential in children are  
14 enormous, and these costs could be ameliorated by adequate  
15 funding for early childhood services; and

16 WHEREAS, as New Mexico faces financial crises and  
17 struggles to fund necessary public services, early childhood  
18 programs have been drastically reduced and, in some cases,  
19 eliminated, even though research and data show the cost-  
20 effectiveness of such programs, and the result of such cutbacks  
21 is a continued cycle of income, educational and social  
22 disparity; and

23 WHEREAS, in its report on early childhood, the world  
24 health organization noted that "globally, societies that invest  
25 in children and families in early years – whether rich or

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1 poor – have the most literate and numerate populations. These  
2 are also the societies that have the best health status and  
3 lowest levels of health inequality in the world"; and

4 WHEREAS, investing in young children is an essential  
5 component for the development of New Mexico, as early  
6 opportunities for learning increase the likelihood that a child  
7 will attend school, and as an adult, achieve higher income,  
8 maintain better health, experience less crime and have lower  
9 levels of welfare dependence than those who do not receive  
10 early development support; and

11 WHEREAS, in New Mexico, all of the early childhood  
12 education programs combined receive less than one percent from  
13 the general fund budget while sixty percent of the state's  
14 budget is spent on education, and New Mexico children are not  
15 getting to school ready to learn; and

16 WHEREAS, long-term studies have shown that for every one  
17 dollar (\$1.00) the state invests in early childhood programs,  
18 it gets back approximately ten dollars (\$10.00) over the life  
19 of the child, and because these programs improve academic  
20 outcomes, early childhood education improves work force  
21 readiness and job productivity; and

22 WHEREAS, the state of New Mexico does not presently have  
23 sufficient resources to address these problems; and

24 WHEREAS, addressing these issues may reduce both the  
25 federal and state need to allocate future resources to

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1 remediate the lasting effects on these children's educational  
2 and life development; and

3 WHEREAS, the federal government holds vast acreage within  
4 New Mexico, some of which has been identified as being suitable  
5 for disposal; and

6 WHEREAS, these disposal lands could be disposed of to New  
7 Mexico and added to the New Mexico state land trust managed by  
8 the state land office to be held in trust for the purpose of  
9 raising revenue to specifically support and fund early  
10 childhood education and other educational purposes; and

11 WHEREAS, New Mexico's Indian nations, tribes and pueblos  
12 are intrinsic to the state's identity and their lands must  
13 remain inviolate; and

14 WHEREAS, New Mexico's land grant communities are also  
15 fundamental to the state's identity and their lands also must  
16 remain inviolate;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
18 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico legislative council  
19 instruct the legislative finance committee and any interim  
20 committees formed to consider economic and rural development,  
21 Native American affairs or land grant issues to examine the  
22 idea of transferring federal lands to the state; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commissioner of public  
24 lands be requested to actively pursue the transfer of federal  
25 disposal lands to state management; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative council and the commissioner of public lands.