

1 A MEMORIAL

2 RECOGNIZING THE WATERSHED HEALTH BENEFITS OF NORTH AMERICAN  
3 BEAVER POPULATIONS; REQUESTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A  
4 STATEWIDE BEAVER MANAGEMENT PLAN.

5  
6 WHEREAS, New Mexico has an arid climate that is typified  
7 by long periods of limited precipitation interspersed by  
8 infrequent heavy rainfalls or sudden snowmelts that are  
9 difficult for soil to absorb, leading to harmful runoff; and

10 WHEREAS, the scarcity of water has made the considered  
11 use and conservation of water resources a foundational  
12 element in both New Mexico's culture and its economy; and

13 WHEREAS, for centuries, New Mexican communities have  
14 based their livelihoods and many cultural traditions on  
15 irrigated agriculture; and

16 WHEREAS, New Mexico's rugged landscapes, containing  
17 diverse populations of wildlife, have attracted generations  
18 of hunters and nature enthusiasts and are among the key  
19 attractions for the state's tourism industry; and

20 WHEREAS, New Mexico is experiencing a multiyear drought  
21 that is creating exceptional strains on farmers and the  
22 state's wildlife resources; and

23 WHEREAS, maintaining, or restoring, upper watershed  
24 health is an important element in assisting New Mexico's  
25 communities, industries and wildlife to meet water scarcity

1 challenges; and

2 WHEREAS, watershed health and restoration efforts  
3 typically require coordination among private businesses and  
4 organizations, as well as local, state, tribal and federal  
5 agencies; and

6 WHEREAS, numerous state agencies participate in ongoing  
7 watershed restoration efforts; and

8 WHEREAS, the dams, ponds and associated wetlands created  
9 by the North American beaver are known to increase  
10 groundwater percolation, which raises local groundwater  
11 tables and storage; and

12 WHEREAS, beaver dams and ponds and their associated  
13 wetlands attenuate erosion, instream silt loading and other  
14 harmful effects associated with heavy rainfalls and sudden  
15 snowmelts; and

16 WHEREAS, beaver ponds and their associated wetlands act  
17 as contaminant sinks and filters, enhancing downstream water  
18 quality; and

19 WHEREAS, during extended periods of drought, beaver  
20 ponds and their associated wetlands greatly enhance the  
21 resiliency of riparian zones, including riverine plant  
22 communities and fish and wildlife populations; and

23 WHEREAS, the department of game and fish has developed  
24 guidance for individual landowners regarding how to relocate  
25 beaver families to their land and how to mitigate or avoid

1 problems created by beavers already on their land; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico would benefit from a strategic plan  
3 for statewide beaver management designed to capture the full  
4 watershed benefits of beaver populations and minimize  
5 conflicts with other land uses, such as agriculture and the  
6 development of transportation infrastructure; and

7 WHEREAS, the state of Utah recently adopted a statewide  
8 beaver management plan developed in a process that involved a  
9 wide range of public and private landowners, users and  
10 managers;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
12 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of game and fish, the  
13 forestry division of the energy, minerals and natural  
14 resources department and the state land office be requested to  
15 develop recommendations jointly on how New Mexico may proceed  
16 to develop a statewide beaver management plan. The  
17 recommendations should include which agency should take the  
18 lead role for development, which stakeholder groups should be  
19 included in the development and a timeline and budget; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of game and  
21 fish, the forestry division of the energy, minerals and  
22 natural resources department and the state land office be  
23 requested to present their recommendations jointly to the  
24 appropriate interim committee or committees by  
25 September 1, 2014; and

