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SENATE MEMORIAL 36

**51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2014**

INTRODUCED BY

Michael Padilla

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION IN WASHINGTON, D.C., THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO WORK TOWARD THE RESTORATION OF FUNDING FOR THE REMAINING LAND ACQUISITION FOR THE VALLE DE ORO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

WHEREAS, in September 2011, United States Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced approval to establish a five-hundred-seventy-acre site along the Rio Grande in Bernalillo county as the southwest's first urban wildlife refuge; and

WHEREAS, the refuge was established due to the partnership efforts of many in the community who recognized the importance of having a wildlife refuge in an urban setting; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the refuge was officially established as the five-hundred-fifty-ninth refuge in the national wildlife

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1 refuge system and named the Valle de Oro national wildlife  
2 refuge; and

3 WHEREAS, the refuge will conserve bosque habitat, water  
4 rights and open space and provide extensive educational  
5 opportunities for people of all ages throughout central New  
6 Mexico; and

7 WHEREAS, the Valle de Oro national wildlife refuge is  
8 located within a half-hour drive to nearly one-half of New  
9 Mexico's population, making it an attractive and accessible  
10 destination; and

11 WHEREAS, the refuge also provides opportunities for hiking  
12 and biking along the planned Rio Grande trail and a connection  
13 to the city of Albuquerque's existing Paseo del Bosque trail;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, according to a report by the United States fish  
16 and wildlife service, *Banking on Nature*, visits to national  
17 wildlife refuges assist economic development in local  
18 communities by supporting private sector jobs, producing  
19 employment income and generating tax revenue at the local,  
20 state and federal levels; and

21 WHEREAS, the report found that approximately eighty-seven  
22 percent of refuge visitors travel from outside the local area,  
23 and local expenditures include food, lodging and  
24 transportation; and

25 WHEREAS, the refuge provides a critical habitat for

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1 migratory birds and other wildlife; and

2 WHEREAS, once fully restored, visitors to the refuge will  
3 be able to see waterfowl, small mammals and neotropical migrant  
4 birds, including the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, the refuge was officially named a project under  
7 President Obama's America's great outdoors initiative and  
8 fulfills the goals of the initiative to work with community  
9 partners to establish a twenty-first century conservation ethic  
10 and reconnect people, especially young people, to the natural  
11 world; and

12 WHEREAS, a partnership composed of the state of New  
13 Mexico, Bernalillo county, the Albuquerque metropolitan arroyo  
14 flood control authority, the United States fish and wildlife  
15 service, the bureau of reclamation and the national fish and  
16 wildlife foundation previously worked together to secure the  
17 first four hundred eighty-eight acres of property; and

18 WHEREAS, funding to complete the acquisition of the  
19 remaining eighty-two acres was proposed in President Obama's  
20 fiscal year 2014 budget; and

21 WHEREAS, the property will remain under threat of  
22 development if not acquired now; and

23 WHEREAS, until the remaining land acquisition is  
24 completed, the refuge is only open to the public on a very  
25 restricted basis and its management, restoration and public-use

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1 plans are on hold;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
3 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico congressional delegation, the  
4 United States department of the interior and the United States  
5 fish and wildlife service be requested to work toward restoring  
6 funding and acquiring the remaining property for the Valle de  
7 Oro national wildlife refuge; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
9 transmitted to the secretary of the interior, the director of  
10 the United States fish and wildlife service and the members of  
11 the New Mexico congressional delegation.