

HOUSE MEMORIAL 114

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015

INTRODUCED BY

Bealquin Bill Gomez

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH TO PROVIDE FOR
BALANCE IN THE ELK POPULATION AND AVAILABLE FORAGE RESOURCES,
TO CONFER WITH FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES AND LANDOWNERS
ON ELK MANAGEMENT AND TO INCREASE LANDOWNER ELK HUNTING TAGS TO
RANCHERS AND FARMERS EXPERIENCING ECONOMIC LOSSES TO CROPS AND
RANGELAND.

WHEREAS, there are approximately ninety-three thousand two
hundred elk in New Mexico, according to the department of game
and fish; and

WHEREAS, the national weather service has recognized that
the state has been in a serious, decades-long drought; and

WHEREAS, to adjust to limited forage resources, New Mexico
beef cattle producers have destocked their herds in New Mexico
to three hundred eighty-seven thousand head, down from eight

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1 hundred twenty thousand in 2010, and sheep producers have
2 reduced their flocks to eighty-five thousand head in 2014, down
3 from one hundred twenty thousand in 2010; and

4 WHEREAS, federal land management agencies have reduced
5 stocking rates of livestock or even destocked New Mexico
6 ranches on federal lands to protect range resources; and

7 WHEREAS, the department of game and fish has allowed the
8 state's elk herd to remain the same and even to increase during
9 this same drought period; and

10 WHEREAS, elk have overgrazed both public and private
11 rangelands; and

12 WHEREAS, elk have caused decimation to irrigated hay and
13 pasture on private lands; and

14 WHEREAS, serious automobile accidents occur when elk graze
15 at night on highway rights of way, and those accidents have
16 increased significantly; and

17 WHEREAS, due to increased grazing by elk, normal rest or
18 rotation grazing systems on federal and private ranches have
19 been compromised, especially during drought; and

20 WHEREAS, the issuance and sale of landowner elk hunting
21 tags have not offset the damage and economic losses to ranches
22 associated with reduced grazing, reduced stocking rates,
23 transportation costs, fence repairs, alternative pasture rents,
24 reduced weaning weights and the costs of hay and other feed
25 supplements; and

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1 WHEREAS, those same damages and economic losses are
2 exacerbated for small landowners, since most do not qualify for
3 landowner elk hunting tags; and

4 WHEREAS, elk populations may cause environmental damage to
5 forage resources, adversely impact other species of wildlife,
6 such as the meadow jumping mouse, and contribute to the
7 historical loss of mule deer populations in New Mexico;

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
9 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department
10 of game and fish be requested to provide for balance in the elk
11 population and available forage resources; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of game and
13 fish be requested to confer formally each year with federal
14 land management agencies and landowners to allow a more
15 inclusive process of elk management; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of game and
17 fish be requested to consider a one hundred percent increase in
18 landowner hunting tags issued to ranchers and farmers who
19 currently receive tags and who have experienced significant
20 economic losses to crops and rangeland; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of game and
22 fish be requested to consider new rules to allow small
23 landowners to receive landowner tags in sufficient quantities
24 to help offset their economic losses; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

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1 transmitted to the director of the department of game and fish
2 and to representatives of the following agencies of the United
3 States department of the interior: the United States forest
4 service, the United States department of agriculture, the
5 national park service, the bureau of land management and the
6 United States fish and wildlife service.

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