HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 3

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2016

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

AFFIRMING THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION; REQUESTING
THE DECLARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WEEK AND
REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH LEAD A STUDY
FOR A GRANT PROGRAM TO INCREASE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a rich cultural history of
environmental stewardship, which should be continued into the
future; and

WHEREAS, environmental education provides an effective
means to teach common core state standards and next generation
science standards, and environmental education increases
student achievement in all fields of study; and

WHEREAS, environmental education provides a theme for
interdisciplinary, project- and place-based learning that

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enhances critical thinking skills, promotes student engagement

in learning and creates a stronger connection to the land of

New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, much of environmental education content falls

squarely into the subjects of science, technology, engineering

and mathematics, each of which provides a high-priority focus

for education; and

WHEREAS, a growing body of research and literature

indicates that being in nature is increasingly important for

children, especially for children raised in highly

industrialized urban environments; and

WHEREAS, outdoor education has been shown to increase

student focus and reduce symptoms of attention deficit disorder

and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; and

WHEREAS, school gardens and wildlife habitats provide

school-based laboratories for science education and other

studies and generate greater community support for school

sites; and

WHEREAS, growing food at school increases nutritional

knowledge, promotes a healthful lifestyle and reduces childhood

obesity; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico environmental literacy plan was

developed by more than three hundred teachers and non-formal

educators to provide guidelines for teaching quality

environmental education both inside the classroom and out of

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doors; and

WHEREAS, environmental education leads to an environmentally literate citizenry that makes sound and effective decisions in a range of contexts and situations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the importance of environmental education that contributes to the education, health and responsible behavior of New Mexicans be affirmed by the legislature; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor be requested to declare a week in April "Environmental Education Week" and to encourage all kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers to teach their students outdoors for at least one hour that week and encourage state agencies to celebrate environmental education through existing programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of game and fish as lead agency and in cooperation with the state parks division and the forestry division of the energy, minerals and natural resources department; the state land office; the department of health; the public education department; and the children, youth and families department be requested to study the feasibility of creating an environmental education grant program to increase opportunities for environmental education for New Mexico students and be requested to report back to the appropriate interim committees by November 1, 2016; and

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1   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education

2 department be requested to provide a link on its website to the

3 New Mexico environmental literacy plan as a resource for

4 teachers; and

5   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

6 transmitted to the governor; the state parks division and the

7 forestry division of the energy, minerals and natural resources

8 department; the department of game and fish; the state land

9 office; the department of health; the public education

10 department; and the children, youth and families department.

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