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HOUSE MEMORIAL 43

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

INTRODUCED BY

Sarah Maestas Barnes

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE DESIGNATIONS FOR LANDS PROPOSED TO BE PART OF AN EXPANDED PECOS WILDERNESS AREA AND FOR ANY OTHER WILDERNESS PROPOSALS IN NEW MEXICO AND TO INCLUDE FOREST-DEPENDENT AND "GATEWAY" COMMUNITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGNATION AND MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THESE LANDS.

WHEREAS, for generations, small, rural and historically isolated communities in New Mexico depended on surrounding forests, grasslands and rivers as their primary sources of food, medicine, fuel and water; and

WHEREAS, the health and vitality of these communities had traditionally been more dependent on the health of their environment than on commerce with urban centers; and

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1 WHEREAS, as a consequence of this dependence on natural
2 systems, New Mexico developed a multitude of cultures that are
3 rooted in a connection to land and water; and

4 WHEREAS, in recent decades, forest "gateway" communities
5 have experienced increasing restrictions on and denial of their
6 traditional access to and use of adjacent lands and waters; and

7 WHEREAS, as these restrictions have grown, the traditional
8 economy of these communities has been undercut, and many
9 formerly self-reliant families have become at least partially
10 dependent on government assistance; and

11 WHEREAS, when nature becomes solely a place that families
12 visit on occasion instead of a partner that they work with on a
13 daily basis, the next generation loses understanding of natural
14 systems, including the importance of periodic grass fires, the
15 value of beaver dams and the care that humans need to take when
16 using wild lands; and

17 WHEREAS, the health and safety of gateway communities
18 remain dependent on the health of their surrounding lands,
19 particularly with regard to the quantity and quality of water
20 flowing from them and their susceptibility to catastrophic
21 wildfire; and

22 WHEREAS, the Pecos wilderness area sits within national
23 forest lands that border several rural communities, and the
24 United States department of agriculture forest service is
25 proposing to expand the Pecos wilderness area; and

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1 WHEREAS, wilderness designation is the most restrictive
2 land management alternative available for national forest land;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, New Mexico recently experienced the creation of
5 alternative land management protections, for the Rio Grande del
6 Norte national monument, that specifically retain certain
7 traditional uses, such as harvesting pinon nuts and wood
8 gathering, and in which adjacent gateway communities were
9 provided a meaningful role in the development of the land
10 management plan;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
12 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that special care be
13 exercised with regard to changing the land management methods
14 for the national forest lands to maintain local cultural
15 values, to ensure watershed health and to allow government
16 agencies to respond to catastrophic wildfires; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States department
18 of agriculture forest service be requested to provide gateway
19 communities, including Indian pueblos, community land grants-
20 mercedes and acequias, with a meaningful role in the
21 development of appropriate and beneficial designations and
22 management plans for lands under its jurisdiction; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States department
24 of agriculture forest service be requested to engage in an
25 immediate dialogue with all the gateway communities of the

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1 Carson and Santa Fe national forests with regard to potential
2 alternative designations for the lands proposed to be included
3 in the Pecos wilderness area; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
5 transmitted to the regional forester for region 3 of the United
6 States department of agriculture forest service; the forest
7 supervisors for each of the national forests within New Mexico;
8 the principal executive office holder for each of the Indian
9 tribes, pueblos and nations within New Mexico; the chairs of
10 the land grant council and the acequia commission; the members
11 of the New Mexico congressional delegation; and the governor.