

SENATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE MEMORIAL 70

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT CONCERNED PARTIES COOPERATE IN ADDRESSING THE
ISSUES AND PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE SANTA FE RIVER BASIN;
REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO URGE THE
APPROPRIATE FEDERAL AGENCIES TO PARTICIPATE IN MEETINGS ON
WATER ISSUES; REQUESTING THAT STATE AGENCIES PARTICIPATE IN
MEETINGS ON WATER ISSUES.

WHEREAS, area residents formed the Santa Fe river
traditional communities collaborative in 2011 to study and
solve problems and issues along the forty-six-mile Santa Fe
river basin; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Santa Fe river traditional
communities collaborative is to seek active stakeholder
engagement, including governmental agency representation and
participation, in the planning and funding of a watershed plan

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1 for addressing the administration and health of riparian areas;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, the impetus for formation of the Santa Fe river
4 traditional communities collaborative came from stakeholders,
5 with support from La Cienega valley association, a neighborhood
6 association and improvement entity composed of the traditional
7 communities of La Cieneguilla, village of La Bajada and La
8 Cienega; and

9 WHEREAS, other traditional community organizations, such
10 as the Agua Fria village association, acequia Agua Fria and the
11 Agua Fria well-owners association joined the Santa Fe river
12 traditional communities collaborative; and

13 WHEREAS, the Santa Fe river traditional communities
14 collaborative membership also includes mutual domestic water
15 associations and acequia associations; and

16 WHEREAS, government organizations that have attended Santa
17 Fe river traditional communities collaborative meetings include
18 representatives from Santa Fe county, the city of Santa Fe, the
19 United States forest service, the United States bureau of land
20 management, the office of United States Senator Tom Udall, the
21 office of United States Representative Ben Ray Lujan, the
22 department of environment and the department of game and fish;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, nongovernmental community organizations that have
25 attended Santa Fe river traditional communities collaborative

1 meetings include representatives of the Santa Fe watershed
 2 association, the WildEarth guardians, Santa Fe girls' school
 3 and Rivers Run through Us; and

4 WHEREAS, many problems along the Santa Fe river are caused
 5 by jurisdictional issues, where several hundred owners control
 6 or regulate the land through which the Santa Fe river and
 7 tributaries pass; and

8 WHEREAS, federal jurisdictional and regulatory issues
 9 arise where the United States forest service, the United States
 10 bureau of land management, the United States army corps of
 11 engineers, the United States bureau of reclamation, the United
 12 States environmental protection agency and the United States
 13 fish and wildlife service may exert authority over the Santa Fe
 14 river across their jurisdictions; and

15 WHEREAS, tribal governments of this region recognize
 16 themselves as true traditional communities and as the first
 17 people who lived in the region and cared for all waterways
 18 descending from the peaks of the Sangre de Cristo mountain
 19 range; and

20 WHEREAS, those tribal governments and communities consider
 21 themselves the first caretakers of these watersheds and have
 22 ensured that adequate flows to the lower areas surrounding
 23 these watersheds are unobstructed; and

24 WHEREAS, the city of Santa Fe has sought to address these
 25 jurisdictional issues and water-flow quality issues by creating

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1 a Santa Fe river commission; and

2 WHEREAS, the work of the Santa Fe river traditional
3 communities collaborative is centered on river restoration,
4 erosion stabilization, water quantity, water quality and open-
5 space planning; and

6 WHEREAS, issues pertaining to water quality along the
7 Santa Fe river basin date back to the 1880 damming of the river
8 by the Santa Fe water and improvement company; and

9 WHEREAS, in 1971, fifty residents of Agua Fria village
10 filed suit against the city of Santa Fe's public utility for
11 cutting off water; and

12 WHEREAS, the farmers in the La Cienega valley and the
13 village of La Bajada who were negatively affected by water
14 quality issues protested to the office of the state engineer
15 and won an annual offsets-release of water from the city of
16 Santa Fe's water treatment facility; and

17 WHEREAS, in 2004, the legislature requested the state
18 engineer to conduct a study and report on the history and
19 status of water rights for lands in the vicinity of Agua Fria;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, as a result of the study, in 2009, the interstate
22 stream commission initiated water rights negotiations to settle
23 the adjudication; and

24 WHEREAS, issues prevalent to water quality along the Santa
25 Fe river basin include the identification and cost of

1 bioremediation systems to neutralize the emerging pollutants
2 and pharmaceuticals from the water that treatment facilities
3 are unable to eliminate; and

4 WHEREAS, river restoration and erosion initiatives require
5 support of both the downstream and upstream owners along the
6 Santa Fe river basin;

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
8 OF NEW MEXICO that to conserve, preserve, protect and develop
9 the Santa Fe river's precious water supplies to effectively
10 plan for the future, all concerned parties be encouraged to
11 come together to solve their mutual issues and problems; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico congressional
13 delegation be urged to encourage the cooperation and
14 participation of federal agencies in meetings with the Santa Fe
15 river traditional communities collaborative; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state engineer be
17 requested to send staff to the appropriate meetings of the
18 Santa Fe river traditional communities collaborative; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that tribal governments be
20 requested to continue to participate in a collaborative and
21 cooperative effort with city, state and federal agencies to
22 achieve successful cooperation and mutual understanding in the
23 protection of the Santa Fe river and other waterways in the
24 region; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

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1 transmitted to the governor, the state engineer, the members of
2 the New Mexico congressional delegation, the commissioner of
3 public lands and the Santa Fe river traditional communities
4 collaborative.

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