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HOUSE MEMORIAL 51

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018

INTRODUCED BY

Angelica Rubio and Stephanie Garcia Richard

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO DIRECT THE INTERIM LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE THAT STUDIES WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES ISSUES TO REVIEW DATA ON THE AMOUNT OF NATURAL GAS BEING VENTED AND FLARED IN NEW MEXICO AND THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF METHANE GAS CAPTURE PLANS.

WHEREAS, venting and flaring of natural gas by oil and gas operators in New Mexico contribute to the waste of limited energy resources and deprive the state of a needed source of revenue; and

WHEREAS, methane waste includes intentional emissions, or venting; equipment leaks, or fugitive emissions; and the combustion of methane, or flaring; and

WHEREAS, a majority of the methane waste occurs from oil and gas wells that operate on federal and state trust lands;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, there is conflicting data on the volume of
3 methane emissions from oil and gas production in New Mexico;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, for example, a report released in November 2017
6 by the nonprofit environmental defense fund estimates that the
7 overall venting, leaking and flaring of natural gas in New
8 Mexico results in a loss of one hundred eighty-two million
9 dollars (\$182,000,000) to two hundred forty-four million
10 dollars (\$244,000,000) worth of natural gas each year; and

11 WHEREAS, the report states that taxpayers and the state
12 budget are losing up to twenty-seven million dollars
13 (\$27,000,000) in taxes and royalties per year; and

14 WHEREAS, the secretary of energy, minerals and natural
15 resources reported in November 2017 that methane emissions from
16 oil and natural gas production in New Mexico had dropped by
17 more than fifty percent over the past year due to advances in
18 technology and changes in the way wells are drilled; and

19 WHEREAS, information provided by the energy, minerals and
20 natural resources department states that vented and flared
21 methane made up just over one percent of New Mexico's total
22 natural gas production; and

23 WHEREAS, the taxes and royalty revenues from captured
24 methane waste could have a significant positive impact on the
25 state and county budgets; and

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1 WHEREAS, additional information is needed to determine the
2 levels of methane emissions from oil and gas and the possible
3 tax and royalty revenue that could be realized from the capture
4 of methane that is burned off or vented directly into the air
5 at drilling sites on public land;

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
7 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico
8 legislative council be requested to direct the interim
9 legislative committee that studies water and natural resources
10 issues to review data on the amount of natural gas being vented
11 and flared in New Mexico and the economic benefits of methane
12 gas capture plans; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the interim legislative
14 committee determine whether legislation to address the issue of
15 capturing vented and flared gas would be necessary for
16 consideration by the first session of the fifty-fourth
17 legislature; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
19 transmitted to the co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative
20 council, the secretary of energy, minerals and natural
21 resources, the executive director of the environmental defense
22 fund and the secretary of finance and administration.

