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SENATE MEMORIAL 33

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

INTRODUCED BY

Carlos R. Cisneros

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING JANUARY 25, 2018 "ACEQUIA DAY" IN THE NEW MEXICO SENATE; RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACEQUIAS TO THE HISTORY, CULTURE, ECONOMY AND MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, for generations, acequias have supported a way of life centered around local agriculture and customs of sharing water; and

WHEREAS, acequias are a centuries-old form of water governance in New Mexico that have created a cultural landscape with a web of waterways that nurture tens of thousands of acres of farmland; and

WHEREAS, acequia customs and traditions regarding agriculture, seed saving, irrigation practices and food preservation are important aspects of the cultural heritage of

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1 New Mexico; and

2 WHEREAS, acequias contribute to the well-being and  
3 livelihood of thousands of families who generate income from  
4 farming and ranching, thereby supporting diversification of New  
5 Mexico's economy through local food production; and

6 WHEREAS, acequias and community ditches number over seven  
7 hundred in New Mexico with each one governed, operated and  
8 maintained by elected commissioners and mayordomos; and

9 WHEREAS, the role of acequias in local governance has been  
10 affirmed by laws enacted by the state of New Mexico recognizing  
11 acequias as political subdivisions and enabling acequias to  
12 have important powers in local water management; and

13 WHEREAS, for the past fifty years, acequias have come  
14 together to protect and defend water rights, advocate for water  
15 policies strengthening acequia governance and support funding  
16 programs for acequia infrastructure; and

17 WHEREAS, the New Mexico acequia association was  
18 established in 1989 to advocate for water policy beneficial to  
19 acequias, and the acequia commission was created in statute in  
20 1993 to serve as an advisory body in state government; and

21 WHEREAS, hydrological studies by the New Mexico water  
22 resources research institute at New Mexico state university  
23 have documented hydrological benefits of acequias, including  
24 aquifer recharge through earthen ditches; and

25 WHEREAS, as water management is complicated by long-term

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1 drought and increasing demands for water, acequias will  
2 continue to be important in any decisions about water policy at  
3 the local and state levels;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
5 NEW MEXICO that January 25, 2018 be declared "Acequia Day" in  
6 the senate in honor of the contributions of acequias to the  
7 history, culture, economy and management of water resources in  
8 New Mexico; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate recognize the  
10 importance of acequias in New Mexico water policy and encourage  
11 state agencies to consult with acequia leadership in decisions  
12 that may affect acequias; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
14 transmitted to the New Mexico acequia association and the  
15 acequia commission.

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