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HOUSE MEMORIAL 28

**54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2019**

INTRODUCED BY

Susan K. Herrera

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 5, 2019 "ACEQUIA DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACEQUIAS TO THE HISTORY, CULTURE, ECONOMY AND MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES IN NEW MEXICO; RECOGNIZING THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW MEXICO ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION.

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

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1 preservation are important aspects of the cultural heritage of  
2 New Mexico; and

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

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

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

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

18 WHEREAS, the New Mexico acequia association was  
19 established in 1989 to advocate for water policy beneficial to  
20 acequias, and the acequia commission was created in statute in  
21 1993 to serve as an advisory body in state government; and

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

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1           WHEREAS, as water management is complicated by long-term  
2 drought and increasing demands for water, acequias will  
3 continue to be important in any decisions about water policy at  
4 the local and state levels;

5           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
6 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 5,  
7 2019 be declared "Acequia Day" in the senate in honor of the  
8 contributions of acequias to the history, culture, economy and  
9 management of water resources in New Mexico; and

10          BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the house of representatives  
11 recognize the thirtieth anniversary of the New Mexico acequia  
12 association and its contributions to water policy in New  
13 Mexico; and

14          BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the house of representatives  
15 recognize the importance of acequias in New Mexico water policy  
16 and encourage state agencies to consult with acequia leadership  
17 in decisions that may affect acequias; and

18          BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
19 transmitted to the New Mexico acequia association and the  
20 acequia commission.