# SENATE MEMORIAL 109

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

### INTRODUCED BY

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## A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO STUDY
THE POTENTIAL FOR FLOODING FOLLOWING THE UTE PARK FIRE AND TO
ASSIST COLFAX COUNTY IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL FLOOD
MITIGATION EFFORTS AND POSSIBLE FUNDING.

WHEREAS, on May 31, 2018 a fire started one mile east of Ute Park and burned a total of thirty-six thousand seven hundred forty acres before the fire was contained on June 19, 2018; and

WHEREAS, thirteen thousand forty-seven acres were designated a high severity burn, which completely destroyed the areas, while twelve thousand six hundred sixty-two acres were designated as a moderate severity burn; and

WHEREAS, of the total acreage burned, approximately twenty-six thousand acres of the fire were on the Philmont .214484.1

scout ranch; and

WHEREAS, the Ute Park fire threatened the communities of Cimarron and Ute Park, with mandatory evacuations in place from June 1 and June 2, 2018, respectively, until both were lifted on June 8, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Ute Park fire destroyed fourteen buildings and threatened over seven hundred fifty structures; and

WHEREAS, although the majority of the fire burned private land, that land is a major watershed for the surrounding area; and

WHEREAS, the Cimarron river watershed, where the majority of the fire occurred, is a primary water source for the town of Springer and a secondary source of water for the village of Cimarron and the city of Raton; and

WHEREAS, additionally, there are thousands of other shareholders and users of the water coming from the watershed in Colfax county and every area downstream from the Cimarron river watershed; and

WHEREAS, in the months that followed the Ute Park fire, there were three separate flood events that impacted Ute Park, according to Colfax county statistics; and

WHEREAS, over the course of the three floods and postflood cleanup, Colfax county removed approximately two hundred thousand yards of material just to keep the public roads clear; and

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WHEREAS, to date, post-fire mitigation has begun in some parts of the Ute Park fire burn scar with funding coming from the United States department of agriculture national resources conservation service New Mexico and some private donations to the Philmont scout ranch; and

WHEREAS, no work or funding has been available to mitigate the area causing the flood damage to Ute Park; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that extreme flooding will continue in the Ute Park area for at least five to seven years before any natural recovery can take place;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the United States army corps of engineers be requested to study the potential for flooding following the Ute Park fire; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States army corps of engineers be requested to assist Colfax county in the identification of potential mitigation efforts and possible funding to undertake mitigation efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the district commander of the Albuquerque district, United States army corps of engineers and the board of county commissioners of Colfax county.