A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO STUDY
THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF REGIONAL MOBILE LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER
UNITS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR SMALL RANCHERS TO HAVE THEIR
LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTERED, CUT AND WRAPPED FOR PERSONAL USE OR
INTRASTATE SALE.

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Taos county economic development
corporation received five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000)
from the New Mexico legislature to establish, equip and
operate New Mexico's first mobile livestock slaughter unit,
which operated until its closure in 2018 due to a lack of
operational funding; and

WHEREAS, the mobile livestock slaughter unit was
initiated to assist northern New Mexico livestock producers
who were contending with high livestock slaughter costs and
the absence of in-state commercial livestock slaughter
facilities with cut and wrap features; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico livestock board no longer
provides meat inspection, which puts small livestock
producers at a significant disadvantage; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico livestock producers must transport
their animals out-of-state to commercial livestock slaughter
facilities with cut and wrap services in Texas, Colorado and
Arizona, which can be a prohibitive expense for many
producers; and

WHEREAS, the Taos county mobile livestock slaughter unit demonstrated the need for state support for a low-cost, efficient alternative to shipping livestock out of state to United States department of agriculture-certified facilities for slaughter, cut and wrap; and

WHEREAS, the agriculture industry and livestock production generate over three billion dollars ($3,000,000,000) annually; and

WHEREAS, the loss of oil and gas tax revenue and jobs points to the critical need for economic diversification, and the establishment of regional mobile livestock slaughter units will aid farmers and ranchers in growing their share of the state's economy as well as contributing tax revenue to rural local governments and the state and providing the state's residents with access to locally sourced food; and

WHEREAS, national and international food systems and food production have been negatively affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 crisis and this has increased dependence on more localized food systems and food production; and

WHEREAS, livestock producers and farmers' markets, food system collaboratives and other farm-to-table advocates continue to express demand for mobile livestock slaughter services in New Mexico; and
WHEREAS, there are questions about how to structure, support and deliver mobile livestock slaughter services to revive this much-needed service and offer it statewide through regionalization;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico department of agriculture, with the assistance of the New Mexico livestock board and the New Mexico farm and ranch resource center at New Mexico state university, be requested to conduct a comprehensive study of the feasibility of a statewide, regionally structured state-supported system to provide mobile livestock slaughter services to support the livestock industry, local economies and residents of the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include a survey of small livestock producers as to the utility of regional mobile livestock slaughter services and consult the 2007-2016 production reports and data collected by the Taos county economic development corporation on the operation of its mobile livestock slaughter unit and the 2018 topical study by the Thornburg foundation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study also include:

A. a description of a model mobile livestock slaughter, cut and wrap system, including meat inspection for intrastate sales;
B. based on the livestock producers survey, recommendations on the number and location of mobile livestock slaughter unit regions and, if feasible, opportunities for co-housing with the cooperative extension service or other agricultural-related offices in those regions;

C. recommendations on the best organizational structure for the mobile livestock slaughter units, including oversight and administrative attachment responsibilities of a state agency such as the New Mexico department of agriculture, the New Mexico livestock board or another state agency or institution;

D. best practices for regional management and operations; and

E. estimates of start-up costs and monthly and annual capital and production costs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico department of agriculture submit its report to the interim committee that is concerned with economic and rural development issues by December 1, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the board of regents of New Mexico state university, the New Mexico department of agriculture and the New Mexico livestock board.