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1 SENATE MEMORIAL 25

2 **57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

10 A MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH TO CONDUCT A  
12 HISTORICAL STUDY ON SHEEP DESCRIBED AS "NEW MEXICO DAHL  
13 HERITAGE SHEEP" LOCATED ON THE TERRA PATRE HERITAGE FARM AND  
14 RANCH IN BELEN AND TO REPORT ITS FINDINGS ON WHETHER THE SHEEP  
15 ARE OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE TO NEW MEXICO AND ITS  
16 RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION OF THE SHEEP TO  
17 THE APPROPRIATE INTERIM LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE.

19 WHEREAS, Donald A. Chavez y Gilbert, a sixteenth-  
20 generation rancher, has sought for about forty years to  
21 interest members of the public and politicians alike in a rare  
22 herd of sheep he describes as "New Mexico Dahl heritage sheep"  
23 that are located on the Terra Patre heritage farm and ranch in  
24 Belen; and

25 WHEREAS, according to Mr. Chavez y Gilbert, the sheep are

1 a living history of the land and a potent reminder of when the  
2 sheep trade was king in the land of enchantment; and

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Chavez y Gilbert claims that the sheep are  
4 descendants of livestock brought to the territory in the 1500s  
5 by the earliest Spanish settlers; and

6 WHEREAS, in particular, Mr. Chavez y Gilbert believes the  
7 sheep are genetically tied to the "lost sheep of Coronado", a  
8 collection of sheep that went astray centuries ago during the  
9 missions of Francisco Vazquez de Coronado on his search for the  
10 seven golden cities of Cibola in present-day New Mexico; and

11 WHEREAS, the university of California has indicated that  
12 genetic testing of the sheep definitively shows that the sheep  
13 are most closely related to two ancient breeds from Spain, the  
14 Xisqueta and Ripollesa, and that the results support the  
15 hypothesis that the sheep descend from original Spanish settler  
16 sheep that subsequently have been feralized;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
18 OF NEW MEXICO that the department of game and fish be requested  
19 to conduct a historical study on the sheep described by Mr.  
20 Chavez y Gilbert as "New Mexico Dahl heritage sheep" and report  
21 its findings on whether the sheep are of historical importance  
22 to New Mexico and its recommendations on management and  
23 preservation of the sheep to the appropriate interim  
24 legislative committee by October 15, 2026; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

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1 transmitted to the director of the department of game and fish  
2 and the appropriate interim legislative committee.

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