

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 59

43RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 1998

INTRODUCED BY

JAMES ROGER MADALENA

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE CULTURAL PROPERTIES REVIEW COMMITTEE PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE KNEELING NUN AND KNEELING NUN MOUNTAIN AS A TREASURED CULTURAL RESOURCE, THAT CONGRESS DECLARE THE KNEELING NUN AND KNEELING NUN MOUNTAIN AS A NATIONAL MONUMENT AND THAT MINING THAT DISTURBS THAT STRUCTURE BE PROHIBITED.

WHEREAS, the Kneeling Nun and Kneeling Nun mountain have been sacred to the Native American populations of southwestern New Mexico for many centuries; and

WHEREAS, the Kneeling Nun and Kneeling Nun mountain have been a sacred shrine and landmark for Hispanics and Anglos since their arrival in southwestern New Mexico, the shrine and landmark being visible from atop the Black range and remaining through the centuries to welcome all to the home of the

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1 ancient Mimbres and Mogollon Indians and to the homeland of
2 the great Apache warriors, Geronimo and Mangas Coloradas; and

3 WHEREAS, the land around the Kneeling Nun and Kneeling
4 Nun mountain has been mined for centuries for copper,
5 turquoise and other minerals, leaving only the Kneeling Nun
6 and her mountain to remind us of the terrain that used to
7 exist in the area; and

8 WHEREAS, the Kneeling Nun and her mountain have not been
9 mined while under the care of the bureau of land management;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, the Phelps Dodge mining corporation now would
12 like to include Kneeling Nun mountain in an expansion of what
13 has been claimed to be the largest open pit copper mine in the
14 world; and

15 WHEREAS, mining operations are already dangerously close
16 to undermining the ninety-foot-high monolith that is the
17 Kneeling Nun; and

18 WHEREAS, Phelps Dodge, in its effort to obtain the
19 Kneeling Nun and her mountain for mining, has offered to move
20 the Kneeling Nun from its visible and historic location or to
21 trade land in the Las Cruces area to the bureau of land
22 management in exchange for the mountain, while at the same
23 time continuing its blasting and mining operations closer and
24 closer to the revered nun; and

25 WHEREAS, destruction of Kneeling Nun mountain will not

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1 add to the ore reserves of Phelps Dodge, nor increase profit
2 or provide new jobs, and the destruction and desecration of
3 this site would increase the life of the mining operation by
4 only four years; and

5 WHEREAS, the community of Santa Rita and surrounding
6 communities have joined together to oppose the sacrilegious
7 destruction and transfer of this site to Phelps Dodge and have
8 joined to have the Kneeling Nun and Kneeling Nun mountain
9 declared a national monument;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
11 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it request the cultural properties
12 review committee and other state officials, including the
13 governor; the commissioner of public lands; the New Mexico
14 secretaries of environment and energy, minerals and natural
15 resources; the executive director of the office of cultural
16 affairs; the director of the department of game and fish; the
17 director of the bureau of mines and mineral resources of the
18 New Mexico institute of mining and technology; the chairman of
19 the soil and water conservation commission; and the director
20 of the agricultural experiment station of New Mexico state
21 university, to make all efforts to permanently protect and
22 preserve the Kneeling Nun and Kneeling Nun mountain as the
23 unique cultural resource that it is and to prohibit mining of
24 the mountain or activity that will disturb the Kneeling Nun;
25 and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the president of the United
2 States, the New Mexico congressional delegation and the
3 secretary of the interior be requested to prohibit the
4 transfer of the Kneeling Nun and any of Kneeling Nun mountain
5 to any company that intends to mine the mountain or in any way
6 destroy or move the Kneeling Nun and that the Kneeling Nun and
7 Kneeling Nun mountain be added to the national register of
8 historic places and the national registry of natural
9 landmarks; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that congress be requested to
11 declare the Kneeling Nun and Kneeling Nun mountain to be a
12 national monument dedicated to preserving the history and
13 cultural heritage of the ancient and great Mimbres and
14 Mogollon cultures; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
16 transmitted to the cultural properties review committee and
17 other state officials, including the governor; the
18 commissioner of public lands; the New Mexico secretaries of
19 environment and energy, minerals and natural resources; the
20 executive director of the office of cultural affairs; the
21 director of the department of game and fish; the director of
22 the bureau of mines and mineral resources of the New Mexico
23 institute of mining and technology; the chairman of the soil
24 and water conservation commission; the director of the
25 agricultural experiment station of New Mexico state

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1 university; the New Mexico congressional delegation; the
2 secretary of the interior; the assistant secretary of Indian
3 affairs; the president of the United States; and the governor
4 of the pueblo of Zuni.