

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 105

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY

Antonio Lujan

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LABOR DEPARTMENT, WITH THE AID OF THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TO COLLECT DATA ON AGRICULTURAL JOBS LOST TO MECHANIZATION.

WHEREAS, agricultural jobs have decreased in number over the last twenty years due to the introduction of machines for harvesting and cultivating many crops; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement have also caused a decrease by almost half in acreage under production of some agricultural crops, such as chile, due to increased imports from Mexico and has led to a reduction in agricultural workers employed in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico state university has developed a machine that will thin chile crops, therefore reducing the number of workers employed in chile fields even more, and other

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1 machines are being developed that will harvest chile resulting
2 in further decline in the number of agricultural workers; and

3 WHEREAS, labor statistics do not reflect the number of
4 jobs lost due to the mechanization of agricultural work or to
5 new agricultural technology; and

6 WHEREAS, even though over sixty percent of agricultural
7 workers are United States citizens, many farm laborers and
8 agricultural workers have limited educations and limited
9 English skills that restrict their ability to find new jobs
10 when their agricultural job is lost to mechanization; and

11 WHEREAS, mechanization and new technology, while
12 decreasing the need for some forms of labor, may increase the
13 need for more skilled forms of labor for which training is
14 required; and

15 WHEREAS, it would be of value to the labor department to
16 have statistics on the loss of agricultural jobs due to
17 mechanization so that projections of jobs that will be lost
18 could be made when new technology and mechanized processes are
19 brought onto the market; and

20 WHEREAS, understanding the impact of mechanization on
21 agricultural labor could help the labor department prepare for
22 retraining and offer other services to those who lose jobs due
23 to the development of new agricultural machinery and
24 technology;

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the labor department, aided by the New
2 Mexico department of agriculture, be requested to collect data
3 on the number of agricultural workers who lose their jobs due
4 to use of newly developed agricultural machinery and
5 technology; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico department of
7 agriculture be requested to keep the department of labor and
8 the office of workforce training and development apprised of
9 technology and newly developed agricultural machinery that is
10 being used by agricultural operations in New Mexico and that
11 reduces the need for agricultural workers and may increase the
12 need for new training in technology and advanced skills; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the labor department use the
14 data it gathers to help provide targeted retraining and other
15 needed services for agricultural workers who lose jobs due to
16 new technology and machinery and make the data and findings
17 available to the public; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
19 transmitted to the secretary of labor, the director of the New
20 Mexico department of agriculture and the director of the office
21 of workforce training and development.