

1 A JOINT MEMORIAL

2 RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURAL
3 PRACTICE AND NATIVE SEEDS TO NEW MEXICO'S CULTURAL HERITAGE
4 AND FOOD SECURITY.

5
6 WHEREAS, the ability to grow food is the culmination of
7 countless generations of sowing and harvesting seeds, which
8 are an inheritance passed hand to hand from our ancestors to
9 us and to our children and grandchildren; and

10 WHEREAS, New Mexico's native foods and crops are the
11 result of the intermixing of Mesoamerican, pueblo, tribal and
12 Hispano cultures that created a unique and diverse indigenous
13 agricultural system and land-based culture; and

14 WHEREAS, traditional agricultural systems and native
15 seeds provide the basis for local food production in acequia,
16 pueblo and tribal communities, represent the foundation for
17 local food security and contribute to the health and
18 well-being of our communities; and

19 WHEREAS, in recent reports, New Mexico has been ranked
20 as having one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the
21 country, indicating that the ability to produce locally grown
22 food is in need of dramatic improvement; and

23 WHEREAS, strengthening local agriculture and indigenous
24 agricultural practices is a vital strategy for strengthening
25 food security at the local and state levels and also enables

1 pueblo, tribal and acequia communities to produce food that
2 is culturally and spiritually meaningful; and

3 WHEREAS, traditional agriculture and seed-saving is part
4 of a culture characterized by communities and families coming
5 together for communal work such as cleaning acequias and
6 preparing fields as well as for ceremony, prayers and
7 blessings, thereby binding our communities, traditions and
8 cultures together; and

9 WHEREAS, traditional farmers from tribal, pueblo and
10 acequia communities have expressed concern about genetic
11 engineering and patenting of seeds as a threat to their
12 cultural and spiritual connection to the earth, as a
13 violation of their rights to save seeds and grow food and as
14 a theft of cultural property; and

15 WHEREAS, traditional farmers from pueblo and acequia
16 communities have come together for a ceremonial seed exchange
17 and a declaration of seed sovereignty between the traditional
18 Native American farmers association and the New Mexico
19 acequia association; and

20 WHEREAS, since the signing of that declaration,
21 resolutions in support of seed sovereignty have been passed
22 by the Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque, the eight northern
23 Indian pueblos council, the all Indian pueblo council and the
24 national congress of American Indians; and

25 WHEREAS, the traditional Native American farmers'

1 association and the New Mexico acequia association have
2 formed the New Mexico food and seed sovereignty alliance and
3 are seeking support for several objectives, including the
4 following:

5 A. protecting native seeds from genetic
6 contamination;

7 B. increasing the extent of the cultivation of
8 native seeds and the raising of small herds of livestock in
9 pueblos and acequia communities;

10 C. supporting the livelihood of traditional
11 farmers and ranchers with financial and educational
12 resources, leading to improved viability of farming; and

13 D. increasing the extent to which locally grown
14 food is served within the same community in which it is
15 grown, particularly by tribal, public and community
16 institutions;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
18 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislature recognize the
19 significance of native seeds to the cultural heritage and
20 food security of New Mexico; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature support the
22 efforts of the New Mexico food and seed sovereignty alliance
23 to prevent genetic contamination of native seeds, strengthen
24 small-scale agriculture and increase the cultivation of
25 native crops in their communities; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico state university college of agriculture be requested to collaborate with the New Mexico food and seed sovereignty alliance in supporting traditional farmers in their communities, protecting native seeds and increasing the cultivation of native seeds by developing specific policy recommendations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor, the board of regents of New Mexico state university and the dean of the college of agriculture and home economics at New Mexico state university and the secretary of Indian affairs. _____