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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 10

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007

INTRODUCED BY

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**FOR THE INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE ECONOMIC AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

A JOINT MEMORIAL

**REQUESTING THE CREATION OF A FOOD GAP TASK FORCE TO
INVESTIGATE WAYS TO IMPROVE ACCESS OF RURAL AND UNDERSERVED
NEW MEXICANS TO SOURCES OF HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE FOODS.**

**WHEREAS, more than six hundred forty-seven thousand
people, one-third of New Mexico's population, live in rural
areas; and**

**WHEREAS, nineteen of New Mexico's thirty-three counties
are considered to have high or persistently high poverty
rates; and**

**WHEREAS, New Mexico is ranked first in the nation in food
insecurity and third in hunger; and**

**WHEREAS, low-income New Mexico families spend as much as
twenty-six percent of their annual income on food, a
proportion that is double that of the national average; and**

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1 WHEREAS, on average, New Mexicans living in rural
2 communities pay eighty-five dollars (\$85.00) for a bag of
3 groceries, compared to urban dwellers who pay fifty-five
4 dollars (\$55.00) for the same bag of groceries; and

5 WHEREAS, many of New Mexico's rural residents must travel
6 thirty to seventy miles to shop at a grocery store; and

7 WHEREAS, health problems caused by poor nutrition,
8 including obesity and diabetes, cost New Mexico three hundred
9 twenty-four million dollars (\$324,000,000) annually; and

10 WHEREAS, those health problems can be remedied with
11 improved nutrition through adequate access to healthy,
12 affordable and culturally appropriate food; and

13 WHEREAS, evidence suggests that many New Mexicans,
14 especially those living in rural areas, do not have adequate
15 access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate foods
16 because they lack access to grocery stores and transportation;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, research shows that people who do not have
19 adequate access to healthy, affordable and culturally
20 appropriate foods are likely to have diet and health problems
21 and to experience forms of food insecurity; and

22 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the state of New Mexico that
23 all New Mexicans have adequate access to healthy, affordable
24 and culturally appropriate foods;

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

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the governor be requested to appoint
2 a food gap task force, whose members shall include
3 representatives from the New Mexico food and agriculture
4 policy council, the New Mexico task force to end hunger, the
5 New Mexico department of agriculture, the economic development
6 department, the department of health, the human services
7 department, the Indian affairs department, the department of
8 transportation, regional councils of government, the grocery
9 industry and appropriate not-for-profit organizations; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor be requested to
11 designate the economic development department to provide
12 administrative support to the food gap task force and that the
13 task force prepare a report to the governor and legislature
14 that provides information about the nature and scope of the
15 barriers that exist between New Mexicans and adequate access
16 to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate foods and
17 that presents recommendations, options and steps that the
18 public and private sectors can use to improve access to
19 healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate foods in New
20 Mexico; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the food gap task force be
22 requested to investigate economic incentives and finance
23 options that the state could provide to assist grocery store
24 owners; methods of improving transportation and distribution
25 services; potential partnerships between the state and private

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1 for-profit and not-for-profit entities; and ways to improve
2 coordination among existing food programs, health initiatives
3 and rural economic development programs to rebuild the
4 infrastructure of New Mexico's food and farming systems; and
5 that the task force develop an action plan that may include
6 pilot projects; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the food gap task force
8 present its report to the governor and to the appropriate
9 interim legislative committees by October 30, 2007; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
11 transmitted to the governor, the director of the New Mexico
12 department of agriculture, the secretary of economic
13 development, the secretary of health, the secretary of human
14 services, the secretary of Indian affairs and the secretary of
15 transportation.

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