

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 68

2 **48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT A  
12 RESEARCH PROJECT THAT WILL ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF WRONG-WAY  
13 DRIVERS ON NEW MEXICO'S INTERSTATE AND LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAYS  
14 AND LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE COUNTERMEASURES.

15  
16 WHEREAS, since November 2006, New Mexico has recorded at  
17 least five incidents of wrong-way drivers on the state's  
18 interstate and limited-access highways, resulting in eight  
19 fatalities and two seriously injured persons; and

20 WHEREAS, since the advent of the interstate highway  
21 system, wrong-way driving on freeways has been a persistent  
22 problem despite fifty years of highway striping and sign  
23 improvements; and

24 WHEREAS, approximately three hundred fifty people  
25 nationally are killed each year in wrong-way freeway crashes

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1 and thousands more are injured; and

2 WHEREAS, there does not appear to be a national-level  
3 program to combat wrong-way driving as there are national-level  
4 programs for rail crossings and highway work zones; and

5 WHEREAS, approximately sixty percent of all wrong-way  
6 crashes involve impaired drivers; and

7 WHEREAS, most wrong-way crashes happen at night,  
8 increasing significantly after 10:00 p.m. and peaking between  
9 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m.; and

10 WHEREAS, the most frequent origin of wrong-way incidents  
11 is a driver traveling in the opposite direction on a freeway  
12 exit ramp onto the freeway main lanes; and

13 WHEREAS, the legislature finds that wrong-way driving is  
14 both a national and a local problem; and

15 WHEREAS, wrong-way crashes have a serious economic impact;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, countermeasures to wrong-way driving fall into  
18 four categories: traditional signage and pavement marking;  
19 innovative signage and pavement marking; geometric  
20 modifications to interchanges; and use of intelligent  
21 transportation system technologies, such as electronic  
22 detection, warning and notification; and

23 WHEREAS, the department of transportation is aware of the  
24 wrong-way driving problem and is considering proposed  
25 countermeasures in conjunction with the federal highway

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1 administration; and

2 WHEREAS, the department of transportation is recognized  
3 nationally as a leader in addressing transportation issues;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
5 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of transportation be  
6 requested to continue its consideration of wrong-way driving  
7 countermeasures and in so doing perform the following tasks:

8 A. establish the state of the practice on safety,  
9 design and operational issues related to wrong-way driving on  
10 freeways, based on review of previous and ongoing studies;

11 B. survey other state departments of transportation  
12 to gather information on typical wrong-way signage and marking  
13 plans and innovative safety practices and countermeasures;

14 C. quantify the frequency, severity and other  
15 characteristics of wrong-way crashes in New Mexico, based on  
16 review of crash reports available from the department of public  
17 safety and other agencies;

18 D. identify available countermeasures to reduce  
19 wrong-way driving and crashes;

20 E. evaluate those countermeasures based on their  
21 cost and their potential to address New Mexico's wrong-way  
22 driving problem;

23 F. document typical situations that are likely to  
24 lead to wrong-way entry onto highways; and

25 G. develop guidelines and recommended practices for

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1 the application of wrong-way countermeasures; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of  
3 transportation be requested to report its findings and  
4 conclusions and any proposed legislation to the appropriate  
5 interim legislative committee by October 1, 2007; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
7 transmitted to the governor, the secretary of transportation,  
8 the administrator of the New Mexico division of the federal  
9 highway administration and the New Mexico legislative council.

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