

A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THAT THE REVITALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS ARE CRITICAL PARTS OF PROMOTING THE HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND ECONOMIC VITALITY OF RURAL AND UNDERSERVED URBAN COMMUNITIES.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a long tradition of agricultural production for local consumption; and

WHEREAS, for many rural, tribal and acequia communities, the cultural and spiritual significance of food encompasses an ancestral connection to land and water, the physical and emotional benefits of working the land, the value of community interdependence in food production and the health benefits of native foods; and

WHEREAS, this connection is being challenged as small-scale farming and ranching have become less economically competitive in conventional agribusiness; and

WHEREAS, in more than one-third of New Mexico counties, the majority of residents must travel more than ten miles to the nearest grocery store; and

WHEREAS, some members of rural communities have to travel seventy miles each way to the nearest grocery store; and

WHEREAS, the cost of food in rural communities is currently as much as forty percent higher than the cost of

food in urban grocery stores; and

WHEREAS, nearly one in four New Mexicans who reside in towns, rural areas or tribal communities with populations below fifty thousand live below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that residents of both urban and rural communities who lack easy access to healthy foods have a higher risk for diabetes, heart disease and other diet-related diseases; and

WHEREAS, currently, ninety-seven percent of the agricultural products grown in the state leaves the state, yet the state imports nearly four billion dollars (\$4,000,000,000) worth of food from elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, demand for locally grown food is growing, while many small- and medium-sized New Mexico farmers and ranchers lack the storage, processing and distribution infrastructure necessary for them to access these growing markets; and

WHEREAS, food and farming businesses, including grocery stores, packing and processing facilities and food distribution, present important opportunities for economic development in rural and underserved urban communities; and

WHEREAS, many rural communities are developing initiatives to revitalize their local food and farming systems; and

WHEREAS, the active support of local and state governments can contribute to the success of these

initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has recognized the importance of local food system development through its "know your farmer, know your food" initiative;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the revitalization and development of local and regional food systems be recognized as a critical effort in promoting the health, well-being and economic vitality of all rural and underserved urban communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the efforts of communities and organizations that are currently working on food system revitalization efforts be commended; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state agencies and tribal, county, municipal and other governmental entities be urged to support local and regional food system development efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state agencies and tribal, county, municipal and other governmental entities be encouraged to take an active role in collaborating with and providing assistance to local and regional food system development efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the governor and appropriate executive agencies, counties, municipalities and Indian nations, tribes and pueblos in the state.