

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY TO ASSIST AND SUPPORT LOCAL CHILE FARMERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISEASE-RESISTANT STRAINS OF CHILE AT THE UNIVERSITY USING PROMISING TECHNOLOGY AND METHODS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is recognized for having the best tasting chile in the United States; and

WHEREAS, New Mexicans take great pride in New Mexico chile as a culinary treasure; and

WHEREAS, chile is recognized as the state vegetable, and "red or green?" is the state question; and

WHEREAS, chile is to New Mexico what the potato is to Idaho and the orange is to Florida; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico tourism department features red and green chiles as symbols for New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico chile association, chile pepper production provides approximately four thousand full- and part-time jobs and contributes about four hundred sixty-five million dollars (\$465,000,000) annually to the New Mexico economy; and

WHEREAS, the chile industry is a home-grown, largely rural industry that has existed in New Mexico's Rio Grande valley for over four centuries; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's chile acreage has declined by two-

thirds from its peak in 1992, when thirty-four thousand five hundred acres were grown in New Mexico, to 2008, when only eleven thousand one hundred acres were grown in the state, according to the national agricultural statistics service; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2009 survey conducted by research and polling, incorporated, ninety-two percent of New Mexico chile consumers are concerned about the decline in chile acreage across the state; and

WHEREAS, about eighty percent of chile consumed in the United States is foreign grown and imported, according to *Western Farm Press*, with chile primarily coming from Mexico, Peru, China and India; and

WHEREAS, the research and polling, incorporated survey reports that seventy-three percent of respondents say it is very important that the chile they purchase is grown in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, this same survey indicates that ninety percent of New Mexico chile consumers agree that officials should do everything in their power to ensure that chile continues to be processed and grown in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, foreign competitors have captured much of New Mexico's market share of chile products because of their advantageous regulatory environment and plentiful, cheap labor; and

WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico chile association,

while consumption of chile is skyrocketing in the United States, New Mexico's production of chile is in steep decline; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico chile farmers have been devastated by chile plant diseases such as phytophthora, verticillium, rootknot nematodes, bacterial leafspot and beet curly top; and

WHEREAS, disease-resistant varieties of chile are not available to New Mexico farmers; and

WHEREAS, many New Mexico chile farmers have reduced or stopped farming chile because of the economic risk resulting from the threat of plant disease;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the board of regents of New Mexico state university be requested to assist farmers with the development of disease-resistant strains of chile using any promising technology and methods; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the board of regents of New Mexico state university.