

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 26

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

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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

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

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

9 WHEREAS, New Mexico's chile acreage has declined by
10 two-thirds from its peak in 1992, when thirty-four thousand
11 five hundred acres were grown in New Mexico, to 2008, when only
12 eleven thousand one hundred acres were grown in the state,
13 according to the national agricultural statistics service; and

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

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

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

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

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

9 WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico chile association,
10 while consumption of chile is skyrocketing in the United
11 States, New Mexico's production of chile is in steep decline;
12 and

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

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

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

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

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

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