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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 20
50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY
Ben Lujan

FOR THE WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

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1 competitive in conventional agribusiness; and

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

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

7 WHEREAS, the cost of food in rural communities is
8 currently as much as forty percent higher than the cost of food
9 in urban grocery stores; and

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

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

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

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

25 WHEREAS, food and farming businesses, including grocery

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1 stores, packing and processing facilities and food
2 distribution, present important opportunities for economic
3 development in rural and underserved urban communities; and

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

6 WHEREAS, the active support of local and state governments
7 can contribute to the success of these initiatives; and

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

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

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

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

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

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1 efforts; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
3 transmitted to the governor.

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