

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2014, AS "NEW MEXICO FOOD AND FARMS DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a vibrant food and farming culture that is significant to rural economy and provides employment opportunities on farms; in direct, wholesale and retail opportunities; and in food processing, distribution and value-added businesses; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that for every one dollar (\$1.00) that goes to local agricultural producers, one dollar eighty cents (\$1.80) is circulated in the local economy; and

WHEREAS, if every New Mexican consumer purchased only fifteen percent of the consumer's food from the state's farmers and ranchers, it would increase annual farm income by three hundred ninety-two million dollars (\$392,000,000); and

WHEREAS, seventy-two farmers markets are serving New Mexico produce to thirty-six thousand people per week in thirty counties by direct sales, electronic benefit transfer allotments, the women, infant and children program and senior farmers market nutrition programs; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, New Mexico farmers markets had annual gross sales of eight million four hundred seventy thousand dollars (\$8,470,000); and

WHEREAS, currently, more than twenty-five New Mexico

farmers sell to over sixty school districts serving more than two hundred forty thousand schoolchildren New Mexico grown fruits and vegetables, enhancing the diets of schoolchildren, promoting healthier lifestyles and increasing academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, an investment in children's health will help stem the rise in childhood obesity in New Mexico, where thirty-two percent of children are overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, a healthier population will help to save the state an additional three hundred twenty-four million dollars (\$324,000,000) in obesity-related health care expenses and an additional one billion two hundred million dollars (\$1,200,000,000) for diabetes treatment; and

WHEREAS, increased investment from the state legislature enables schools to feature New Mexico grown produce and meet federal nutrition requirements, serve more fresh fruits and vegetables to New Mexico children, and support economic development opportunities for local farmers, entrepreneurs and communities; and

WHEREAS, capital outlay projects and general appropriations are means by which to expand New Mexico produce markets; and

WHEREAS, creating community kitchens can accelerate the growth of rural food entrepreneurs, using a proven model of kitchen incubation as exemplified by the "Mixing Bowl"

project, a federal food-and-drug-administration-certified commercial kitchen at Albuquerque's south valley economic development center; and

WHEREAS, the growing number of New Mexico's community and school gardens provides an important way for children and families to engage in growing food and provide a way for children to learn about nutrition and life sciences; and

WHEREAS, to achieve this goal, programs such as FoodCorps and AmeriCorps, whose volunteers devote a year of their lives to local communities, have built or expanded hundreds of garden projects, donated thousands of pounds of garden produce, engaged hundreds of community volunteers and reached students throughout New Mexico;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Wednesday, January 29, 2014, be declared "New Mexico Food and Farms Day" in the house of representatives as acknowledgment that the time has come to invest in New Mexico's children, economy and future by supporting farmers, farmers markets and food entrepreneurs and by encouraging public schools and others to continue and expand the purchase of New Mexico grown fruits and vegetables; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the New Mexico food and agriculture policy council, the New Mexico department of agriculture and the

public education department.