

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE TO PROMOTE THE
3 USE OF OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS IN NEW MEXICO SCHOOLS AND
4 REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO DECLARE AN "OUTDOOR LEARNING DAY"
5 IN 2021.

6
7 WHEREAS, New Mexico is rich in diverse natural resources
8 and wildlife and features outstanding natural areas that
9 provide residents with a wide variety of outdoor
10 opportunities; and

11 WHEREAS, a growing body of research and literature
12 indicates that being in nature is increasingly important for
13 children, benefiting their emotional, mental and physical
14 well-being; as one student put it, "Having fresh air and
15 movement is essential."; and

16 WHEREAS, studies have shown that students who learn
17 outdoors develop a sense of self, independence, confidence,
18 creativity and decision-making skills; in the words of
19 another student, "It helps students know that learning can
20 occur anywhere, not just inside a classroom."; and

21 WHEREAS, studies have also shown that outdoor classrooms
22 can lead to better test scores, behavior and attendance; as
23 another student said, "Children don't want to be stuck at one
24 desk in a small classroom."; and

25 WHEREAS, outdoor classrooms are more important than ever

1 and are being successfully used across the country during the
2 pandemic; and

3 WHEREAS, outdoor classrooms can be a solution to having
4 a safe and distanced classroom in every school, giving
5 students the ability to learn in person while in a healthy
6 environment; another student summed it up in saying, "They
7 help germs disperse."; and

8 WHEREAS, outdoor classrooms can be applicable and
9 advantageous to all students, no matter their age, learning
10 ability or skills, and they are practical and affordable; and

11 WHEREAS, studies have shown that outdoor classrooms
12 encourage community and family involvement and can increase
13 enthusiasm for school; they can "give kids something to look
14 forward to when coming to school", as another student said;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, outdoor classrooms can help students learn to
17 be good stewards of the natural environment; one student got
18 to the point by saying, "Being outdoors a lot teaches the
19 kids how amazing nature is and can eventually help them
20 become good citizens and want to take care of the
21 environment."; and

22 WHEREAS, the New Mexico legislature unanimously passed
23 the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights in 2012 (Senate
24 Memorial 10 and House Memorial 3), encouraging state agencies
25 to develop outdoor learning opportunities for New Mexico's

1 youth, which many have done; and

2 WHEREAS, these state agencies and other organizations
3 have expressed interest in establishing and expanding outdoor
4 classrooms for schools;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that, using existing resources, the
7 New Mexico outdoor recreation division of the economic
8 development department and the state parks division of the
9 energy, minerals and natural resources department be
10 requested to convene a task force to develop and recommend
11 actions to establish and expand the use of outdoor classrooms
12 for schools and build career paths for New Mexico's youth by
13 coordinating existing efforts on outdoor recreation and
14 education and youth career development; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the two divisions be
16 requested to include among the task force membership
17 representatives from the wild friends program, environmental
18 education of New Mexico and the following state agencies:
19 the public education department; the forestry division of the
20 energy, minerals and natural resources department; the early
21 childhood education and care department; the state land
22 office; the department of game and fish; the cultural affairs
23 department; and the tourism department; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested
25 to submit a report to the appropriate interim legislative

1 committees by October 31, 2021 that details the task force's
2 recommendations, including strategies to promote outdoor
3 classrooms in all schools in New Mexico; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor be requested to
5 declare an "Outdoor Learning Day" in 2021; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
7 transmitted to the governor, the New Mexico outdoor
8 recreation division of the economic development department
9 and the state parks division of the energy, minerals and
10 natural resources department for dissemination to task force
11 invitees; the wild friends program; and environmental
12 education of New Mexico.

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