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HOUSE MEMORIAL 35

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2023

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS TO THE STATE.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is well known for its beautiful and abundant resources, which provide ecological, cultural and economic benefits and make New Mexico the land of enchantment; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's forests cover almost one-third of the state, or twenty-four million seven hundred thousand acres, with forty-two percent being privately owned, including tribal lands; and

WHEREAS, forests provide essential ecological services, such as providing a habitat for wildlife, oxygen, clean water, the uptake of carbon dioxide and cooling temperatures. As one student said, "Forests are not just trees, they are life.". As another student said, "If forests disappear, many species won't

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1 have a home."; and

2 WHEREAS, forests provide cultural connections that are
3 essential to the rich heritage of New Mexico, and families
4 throughout New Mexico have loved the land, including forests,
5 for generations. As one student said, "My grandpa and I go to
6 the forest to hunt piñon nuts."; and

7 WHEREAS, the loss of forests takes away the culture, way
8 of life and income for many New Mexicans – from grazing,
9 collecting firewood, harvesting medicinal herbs and wood for
10 latillas, hunting and other activities; and

11 WHEREAS, outdoor recreation, including recreation in the
12 forests, brings in billions of dollars to New Mexico's economy
13 and makes up more than two and one-tenth percent of the state's
14 gross domestic product; and

15 WHEREAS, mental wellness, which can be found through
16 connection with the forest, is priceless. As one student said,
17 "The forest is a peaceful place where I go to clear my mind."
18 As another student said, "Forests provide sanctuary."; and

19 WHEREAS, forests are under threat from drought,
20 catastrophic wildfires, rising temperatures, trash,
21 overcrowding of trees and bark beetles. As one student said,
22 "Everything in the forest is connected. If one thing dies,
23 others die, too."; and

24 WHEREAS, people can help prevent catastrophic wildfires by
25 putting out campfires, not throwing cigarette butts out of car

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1 windows and educating others about how to keep the forest safe;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, New Mexico's *2020 Forest Action Plan* calls for
4 the support and expansion of public outreach and education to
5 "foster a society that supports watershed restoration
6 activities and values resilient and healthy forest ecosystems";
7 and

8 WHEREAS, many New Mexicans are unaware of the importance
9 of forests and the threats to them; and

10 WHEREAS, the urgency for forest education is growing, and
11 education and outreach can help develop the next generation of
12 environmental stewards;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
14 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the importance
15 of forests to the state be recognized for the forests'
16 ecological, cultural and economic purposes; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor be requested to
18 declare a forest appreciation day; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state agencies involved in
20 protecting forests be commended for those agencies' efforts and
21 encourage them to continue to work with private landowners,
22 tribal entities and other voices to protect the forests; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state agencies involved in
24 protecting forests be encouraged to continue to invest in
25 education and outreach, using social media, student work and

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1 other out-of-the-box ideas to raise awareness about forests and
2 to continue to provide funding for student experiences, such as
3 field trips to forests and other outdoor learning
4 opportunities; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all New Mexicans be encouraged
6 to help protect the state's forests by being good stewards of
7 the land and leaving no trace while out in the forests by
8 removing trash and fully extinguishing campfires; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
10 transmitted to the governor, the New Mexico outdoor recreation
11 division of the economic development department, the state
12 forestry division and the state parks division of the energy,
13 minerals and natural resources department, the state land
14 office, the department of game and fish and the office of
15 natural resources trustee.

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