

1 A MEMORIAL

2 HONORING THE RESPONSE OF NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY'S
3 COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES'
4 STAFF DURING THE HERMIT'S PEAK/CALF CANYON FIRE.

5
6 WHEREAS, the New Mexico state university college of
7 agricultural, consumer and environmental sciences'
8 agriculture experiment station, the John T. Harrington
9 forestry research center, operates in Mora with a mission to
10 advance the understanding of restoration activities on
11 forested areas; and

12 WHEREAS, the forestry research center also provides
13 science-based solutions for private, tribal, state and
14 federal forest managers who face the threat of catastrophic
15 wildfires due to overgrown forests and the inability of
16 post-fire forest communities and ecosystems to naturally
17 regenerate after such fires; and

18 WHEREAS, in the spring of 2022, New Mexico suffered the
19 largest and most destructive wildfire in the state's history;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, the Hermit's peak fire began on April 6, 2022,
22 when the United States forest service lost control of a
23 prescribed burn, and the Calf canyon fire began on April 19,
24 2022, when an improperly extinguished United States forest
25 service pile burn operation from January 2022 rekindled; and

1 WHEREAS, the two fires merged during a major wind event
2 on April 22, 2022, creating the Hermit's peak/Calf canyon
3 fire and ultimately torching more than three hundred
4 forty-one thousand acres; and

5 WHEREAS, the Hermit's peak/Calf canyon fire breached the
6 John T. Harrington forestry research center's property, the
7 only facility in the southwest dedicated to reforesting lands
8 burned by catastrophic wildfires, and appeared to be on a
9 path to destroy the forestry research center; and

10 WHEREAS, when faced with evacuation orders and the
11 threat of losing critical research, Professor Owen Burney,
12 director of the John T. Harrington forestry research center,
13 and team members Tammy Parsons, Pouli Sikelianos, Joshua
14 Trujillo and Donna Ebler mobilized to save the forestry
15 research center's vast seed collection; and

16 WHEREAS, the forestry research center team installed
17 impromptu irrigation systems during the evacuation to keep
18 seedlings alive, built fire lines and flood protection
19 facility structures around the property and moved the entire
20 seed bank and tree seeds to safety; and

21 WHEREAS, the forestry research center team also gave up
22 planned personal leave to be available twenty-four hours,
23 seven days a week during the height of the fire to assist
24 with all staff and research needs; and

25 WHEREAS, the seed bank of more than three million seeds

1 was originally moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico, followed by a
2 move of more than one hundred fifty miles south to the Los
3 Lunas agricultural science center of the college of
4 agricultural, consumer and environmental sciences of New
5 Mexico state university after the fire shifted toward San
6 Miguel county; and

7 WHEREAS, about seventy-five thousand tree seedlings were
8 retrieved from the forestry research center's nursery in a
9 rescue operation carried out over two days with assistance
10 from outside groups, including a New Mexico state police
11 escort; and

12 WHEREAS, the New Mexico state university college of
13 agricultural, consumer and environmental sciences cooperative
14 extension service district team made significant
15 contributions to the fire response; and

16 WHEREAS, Christina Turner, Suzanne DeVos-Cole, Tom
17 Dominguez, Monica Gonzales-Wilder, Boe C. Lopez, John
18 Martinez, Tom Dean and Leigh Ann Marez coordinated and
19 communicated information among counties in the northern
20 district, emergency services, the New Mexico livestock board
21 and other crucial agencies; and

22 WHEREAS, thanks to the heroic work of Dr. Burney and the
23 John T. Harrington forestry research center team and the New
24 Mexico state university college of agricultural, consumer and
25 environmental sciences team, the resources of the only

1 research program in the southwestern United States that
2 focuses on forest nursery technologies, tree improvement and
3 the ecophysiology of young forest trees to facilitate
4 ecological restoration were saved;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
6 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Professor
7 Owen Burney and team members Tammy Parsons, Pouli Sikelianos,
8 Joshua Trujillo and Donna Ebler be recognized and honored for
9 their roles in saving the vast seed collection and tree
10 seedlings of the John T. Harrington forestry research center
11 in the Mora agricultural experiment station; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico state
13 university cooperative extension service team of Christina
14 Turner, Suzanne DeVos-Cole, Tom Dominguez, Monica Gonzales-
15 Wilder, Boe C. Lopez, John Martinez, Tom Dean and Leigh Ann
16 Marez be recognized and honored for their significant
17 contributions in addressing the challenges created by the
18 Hermit's peak/Calf canyon fire; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
20 transmitted to Professor Owen Burney and team members Tammy
21 Parsons, Pouli Sikelianos, Joshua Trujillo and Donna Ebler;
22 New Mexico state university cooperative extension service team
23 members Christina Turner, Suzanne DeVos-Cole, Tom Dominguez,
24 Monica Gonzales-Wilder, Boe C. Lopez, John Martinez, Tom Dean
25 and Leigh Ann Marez; and the board of regents of New Mexico

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