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HOUSE MEMORIAL 41

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012

INTRODUCED BY

Jim W. Hall

A MEMORIAL

HONORING THE HEROIC EFFORTS OF FIREFIGHTERS IN THE DAYS DURING,
AND THE RECOVERY FOLLOWING, THE LAS CONCHAS WILDFIRE.

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2011, the Las Conchas wildfire unexpectedly ignited in the Jemez mountains surrounding Los Alamos, the Valles Caldera national preserve and Bandelier national monument; and

WHEREAS, in the first hours after the fire erupted, the rapid response of the La Cueva volunteer fire department, the United States park service and the United States forest service preempted the fire from growing in ferocity and shifting direction, and those efforts should be commended, as the fire would have been much worse had the response not come so quickly; and

WHEREAS, despite valiant efforts, the flames were

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1 extraordinarily wind-driven on June 26 and 27 and quickly raced
2 toward Los Alamos national laboratory, exploding overnight from
3 four thousand acres to over forty thousand acres and, in the
4 days that followed, scorching one hundred fifty-six thousand
5 five hundred ninety-three acres of beautiful northern New
6 Mexico land before finally being fully contained on August 3,
7 2011; and

8 WHEREAS, across the state, people were deeply saddened and
9 concerned as they watched the out-of-control wildfire burn
10 across the beautiful and sacred lands of the Santa Fe national
11 forest in Sandoval, Los Alamos and Rio Arriba counties; the
12 Pueblo of Santa Clara; the Pueblo of Jemez; the Pueblo of
13 Cochiti; the Pueblo of Santo Domingo; Bandelier national
14 monument; and the Valles Caldera national preserve; and

15 WHEREAS, the Las Conchas wildfire destroyed sixty-three
16 homes and forty-nine other buildings, forever changing the
17 lives of the people that owned those residences and buildings;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, thousands of residents in the Jemez mountains,
20 including residents of Los Alamos, were forced to evacuate for
21 their safety, and Los Alamos national laboratory closed during
22 this enormous, uncontained wildfire, the largest in New
23 Mexico's history; and

24 WHEREAS, one hundred twenty-eight of Los Alamos' finest
25 firefighters were called upon to battle the blazes; and

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1 WHEREAS, the heroic fight of the Los Alamos firefighters
2 would not have been possible without the help of other
3 resources; and

4 WHEREAS, Los Alamos county was assisted by numerous
5 local, state and federal agencies, including firefighters,
6 police, emergency services and support personnel from Rio
7 Arriba, Santa Fe and Sandoval counties; Cimarron, Tucumcari,
8 Abiquiu, Chamita and Santa Fe; the Pueblo of Santa Clara; the
9 Agua Sana volunteer fire department; the state fire marshal;
10 the United States forest service and the United States park
11 service; and Los Alamos national laboratory; and

12 WHEREAS, the sight of the flames on the mountainside
13 reminded New Mexicans of the Cerro Grande wildfire just eleven
14 years prior; and

15 WHEREAS, lessons learned from the Cerro Grande wildfire
16 and protective and proactive projects undertaken by Los Alamos
17 county and Los Alamos national laboratory benefited
18 firefighters' efforts in 2011; and

19 WHEREAS, although the Las Conchas wildfire devastated many
20 homes and a significant amount of land and property, no lives
21 were lost; and

22 WHEREAS, the fire is a testimonial to the resilience of
23 New Mexico residents, and their ability to survive these
24 experiences has only made them stronger in their resolve to
25 stand together during their greatest times of need, which is

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1 proof that New Mexico residents shall always persevere;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the
4 firefighters, and all of those who assisted in fighting the
5 blaze, be honored for their service and resolve to contain the
6 flames and protect the people and the lands of New Mexico; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
8 transmitted to the council of the incorporated county of Los
9 Alamos and the governor.