

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 57

2 **51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 John Pinto

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO TRANSFER FORT WINGATE LAND
12 ADJACENT TO INTERSTATE 40 TO THE NAVAJO NATION FOR ECONOMIC
13 DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES.

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15 WHEREAS, for generations, the Navajo people have
16 considered the Fort Wingate area to be part of their homeland
17 in New Mexico; and

18 WHEREAS, Fort Wingate was identified on Spanish maps in
19 1778 as Navajo territory; and

20 WHEREAS, in 1970, the Indian claims commission decided
21 that Fort Wingate was aboriginal land of the Navajo Nation; and

22 WHEREAS, this transfer has been of concern to the Navajo
23 Nation for many years; and

24 WHEREAS, documents show that the area was to be returned
25 to the Navajo Nation after the forcible removal of Navajo

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1 residents from their homes and land to establish Fort Wingate
2 for temporary federal use during World War II; and

3 WHEREAS, the land was transferred by executive order from
4 the federal department of the interior, where it was being held
5 in trust for the Navajo people, to the federal department of
6 defense, where it was to be held until it was no longer
7 required for the war effort; and

8 WHEREAS, since the land was decommissioned as a military
9 installation, it is appropriate that the land be returned to
10 the department of the interior on behalf of the Navajo Nation
11 as was originally intended in the executive order; and

12 WHEREAS, the property in question, located near Gallup,
13 adjacent to and south of interstate 40, is part of the
14 traditional homeland of the Navajo people; and

15 WHEREAS, it is of utmost concern to the Navajo Nation that
16 the land be transferred for the benefit of the Navajo Nation
17 through economic development; and

18 WHEREAS, because the Navajo people have occupied and cared
19 for this land for more than three hundred years, it is
20 appropriate that this land be returned to trust status for the
21 Navajo people;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
23 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the United States congress be urged to
24 return that portion of Fort Wingate adjacent to interstate 40
25 to the department of the interior to be held in trust for the

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Navajo Nation for economic development purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the New Mexico congressional delegation, the governor, the secretary of Indian affairs, the president of the Navajo Nation and the speaker of the Navajo Nation council.