A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH TO WORK WITH THE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF
CONDUCTING LIMITED-ENTRY BOW HUNTS FOR ELK IN THE BACKCOUNTRY
OF BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT.

WHEREAS, Bandelier national monument in the Jemez
mountain range was established in 1916 and is comprised of
nearly forty thousand acres; and

WHEREAS, by 1916, unregulated hunting had eliminated elk
from the Jemez mountain range, and other wildlife game
species were on the brink of elimination in the Jemez
mountains as well; and

WHEREAS, today, elk have been restored to the Jemez
mountains and have grown rapidly in population, largely
through conservation efforts funded by hunters; and

WHEREAS, hunting on public lands is an important
management tool to ensure the health of the ecosystem,
particularly in the absence of some species of large, natural
predators; and

WHEREAS, in October 1976, nearly seventy percent of the
backcountry of Bandelier national monument became a
designated wilderness area, allowing greater focus on the
restoration of elk and other endangered wildlife; and

WHEREAS, today, these remote areas of the backcountry
see few visitors, but they could offer a unique backcountry experience to hunters; and

WHEREAS, on other land managed by the national park service, overpopulation of wild ungulates has been shown to cause long-term habitat degradation; and

WHEREAS, instances of habitat degradation of aspens and other native plant species that are heavily browsed by elk have been documented in Bandelier national monument, putting the regeneration of aspen stands at risk; and

WHEREAS, a proposed transfer of the management of Valles Caldera national preserve to the national park service includes a requirement that a hunting program be established at Valles Caldera national preserve; and

WHEREAS, given that Valles Caldera national preserve is contiguous to Bandelier national monument, establishing a hunting program in the backcountry of Bandelier national monument should also be considered; and

WHEREAS, a limited-entry bow hunt for elk in the backcountry portions of Bandelier national monument could provide an important management tool for preserving the ecological integrity of the monument lands and could help to redistribute elk onto surrounding national forest lands; and

WHEREAS, the department of game and fish is charged with managing wildlife in trust for the public; and

WHEREAS, the national park service oversees and manages
all of the national parks, including Bandelier national
monument and, potentially, Valles Caldera national preserve;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of game and fish be
requested to work with the national park service to determine
the feasibility of conducting limited-entry bow hunts for elk
in the backcountry of Bandelier national monument; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the feasibility study
consider the appropriateness of requesting federal
legislation to permit the United States secretary of the
interior to allow limited-entry bow hunting of elk to
preserve the ecological health of backcountry areas and to
provide expanded hunting opportunities in Bandelier national
monument for New Mexico residents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of game and
fish formulate a report of the findings and recommendations
of the feasibility study and present the report to the
appropriate interim committee by October 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of game and
fish transmit the feasibility study findings to the members
of the New Mexico congressional delegation for further
consideration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
transmitted to the superintendent of Bandelier national
monument, the United States secretary of the interior, the
director of the department of game and fish and the members
of the New Mexico congressional delegation.