

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 38

2 **48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURAL  
12 PRACTICE AND NATIVE SEEDS TO NEW MEXICO'S CULTURAL HERITAGE AND  
13 FOOD SECURITY.

14  
15 WHEREAS, the ability to grow food is the culmination of  
16 countless generations of sowing and harvesting seeds, which are  
17 an inheritance passed hand to hand from our ancestors to us and  
18 to our children and grandchildren; and

19 WHEREAS, New Mexico's native foods and crops are the  
20 result of the intermixing of Mesoamerican, pueblo, tribal and  
21 Hispano cultures that created a unique and diverse indigenous  
22 agricultural system and land-based culture; and

23 WHEREAS, traditional agricultural systems and native seeds  
24 provide the basis for local food production in acequia, pueblo  
25 and tribal communities, represent the foundation for local food

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1 security and contribute to the health and well-being of our  
2 communities; and

3 WHEREAS, in recent reports, New Mexico has been ranked as  
4 having one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the  
5 country, indicating that the ability to produce locally grown  
6 food is in need of dramatic improvement; and

7 WHEREAS, strengthening local agriculture and indigenous  
8 agricultural practices is a vital strategy for strengthening  
9 food security at the local and state levels and also enables  
10 pueblo, tribal and acequia communities to produce food that is  
11 culturally and spiritually meaningful; and

12 WHEREAS, traditional agriculture and seed-saving is part  
13 of a culture characterized by communities and families coming  
14 together for communal work such as cleaning acequias and  
15 preparing fields as well as for ceremony, prayers and  
16 blessings, thereby binding our communities, traditions and  
17 cultures together; and

18 WHEREAS, corporations are manipulating seeds, animals and  
19 wild plants through genetic engineering by cross-species  
20 manipulation of genetic material and are cloning animals for  
21 reproduction, the effect of which on the environment and on  
22 human health has not been studied adequately and is not well  
23 understood; and

24 WHEREAS, despite unknown health and safety effects,  
25 labeling of genetically engineered or cloned foods is not

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1 required; and

2 WHEREAS, corporations are patenting genetic material and  
3 the processes of genetic modification, and corporations have  
4 claims on seeds that prohibit farmers from continuing the seed-  
5 saving practices of their ancestors; and

6 WHEREAS, genetically engineered crops, such as maize in  
7 Oaxaca, Mexico, and canola in Canada, have escaped into the  
8 environment and contaminated native seeds and wild plants; and

9 WHEREAS, corporations have sued individual farmers when  
10 corporate-owned genetic material has drifted to neighboring  
11 fields and crops, thereby undermining the ability of farmers to  
12 grow food and the viability of the reproduction of seeds; and

13 WHEREAS, countries such as Japan and England, and some  
14 counties in Africa, have refused genetically modified foods and  
15 prohibit the introduction of genetically engineered crops on  
16 their lands because of unknown health effects; and

17 WHEREAS, traditional farmers from tribal, pueblo and  
18 acequia communities have expressed concern about genetic  
19 engineering and patenting of seeds as a threat to their  
20 cultural and spiritual connection to the earth, as a violation  
21 of their rights to save seeds and grow food and as a theft of  
22 cultural property; and

23 WHEREAS, traditional farmers from pueblo and acequia  
24 communities have come together for a ceremonial seed exchange  
25 and a declaration of seed sovereignty between the traditional

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1 Native American farmers association and the New Mexico acequia  
2 association; and

3 WHEREAS, since the signing of that declaration,  
4 resolutions in support of seed sovereignty have been passed by  
5 the Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque, the eight northern Indian  
6 pueblos council, the all Indian pueblo council and the national  
7 congress of American Indians; and

8 WHEREAS, the traditional Native American farmers'  
9 association and the New Mexico acequia association have formed  
10 the New Mexico food and seed sovereignty alliance and are  
11 seeking support for several objectives, including the  
12 following:

13 A. protecting native seeds from genetic  
14 contamination;

15 B. increasing the extent of the cultivation of  
16 native seeds and the raising of small herds of livestock in  
17 pueblos and acequia communities;

18 C. supporting the livelihood of traditional farmers  
19 and ranchers with financial and educational resources, leading  
20 to improved viability of farming; and

21 D. increasing the extent to which locally grown  
22 food is served within the same community in which it is grown,  
23 particularly by tribal, public and community institutions;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislature recognize the

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1 significance of native seeds to the cultural heritage and food  
2 security of New Mexico; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature support the  
4 efforts of the New Mexico food and seed sovereignty alliance to  
5 prevent genetic contamination of native seeds, strengthen  
6 small-scale agriculture and increase the cultivation of native  
7 crops in their communities; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico department of  
9 agriculture be requested to collaborate with the New Mexico  
10 food and seed sovereignty alliance in supporting traditional  
11 farmers in their communities, protecting native seeds and  
12 increasing the cultivation of native seeds by developing  
13 specific policy recommendations; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
15 transmitted to the governor, the director of the New Mexico  
16 department of agriculture and the secretary of Indian affairs.