FIFTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
SECOND SESSION, 2014

SENATE MEMORIAL 70

INTRODUCED BY

SENATOR WILLIAM P. SOULES

A MEMORIAL
HONORING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964

WHEREAS, in 1964, the United States Congress passed the Wilderness Act by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, and this farsighted legislation was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on September 3, 1964; and

WHEREAS, the Wilderness Act created America’s National Wilderness Preservation System of Federal Lands to be "administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and will provide for the protection of these areas and the preservation of their wilderness character"; and

WHEREAS, the Wilderness Act made it the "policy of Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness . . . in order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition"; and

WHEREAS, wilderness, "in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is recognized as Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable, and has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation"; and
WHEREAS, President Barack Obama said in proclaiming September each year as "National Wilderness Month": "The mystery and wonder of wilderness is deeply rooted in our national character. For many of the first Americans — American Indians and Alaska Natives — the wilderness provided a source of sustenance and a foundation for their ways of life. Later, as explorers and the pioneers of a young country moved west, they found adventure and new beginnings in the landscapes of our Nation. From our earliest days, America's identity has been tied to the powerful waterfalls, soaring peaks, and vast plains of its land"; and

WHEREAS, inspired by Aldo Leopold and the Wilderness Act of 1964, New Mexico established the first designated wilderness area, the Gila Wilderness, and now there are twenty-five congressionally designated wilderness areas that cover one hundred nine million five hundred eleven thousand nine hundred sixty-six acres, allowing past, present and future New Mexicans to take special pride and additional pleasure in enjoying the benefits of the wilderness;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the significance of the national wilderness preservation system to America's cultural, scientific, historical, cultural and spiritual heritage be recognized; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the wilderness be recognized as a place where everyone can experience the spirit that has shaped America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in this Golden Anniversary year of the Wilderness Act, all Americans be urged to visit and enjoy wilderness areas, to learn their history and to aid in the continuing protection of America's precious national treasures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the New México Wilderness Alliance.

Signed and Sealed at The Capitol, in the City of Santa Fe.

[Signature]
John A. Sánchez, President
New Mexico State Senate

[Signature]
Senator William P. Soules
New Mexico State Senate

[Signature]
Lunore M. Naranjo, Chief Clerk
New Mexico State Senate