SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 71

46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2004

INTRODUCED BY

Richard C. Martinez

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE ASSESS THE PUBLIC HEALTH VALUE OF IMPLEMENTING THE
PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, every New Mexican has an equal right to live in a
healthy and safe environment; and

WHEREAS, the precautionary principle, a belief that "when
an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the
environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if
some cause and effect relationships are not fully established
scientifically"; and

WHEREAS, experts have recognized the precautionary
principle as a highly effective decision-making tool for
reducing negative and costly impacts on public health resulting
from exposure to environmental toxins; and

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WHEREAS, the state departments of health and environment and other state agencies are charged with controlling and abating public health conditions, including the causes of disease, and with maximizing the economic and cultural benefits of healthy people and communities; and

WHEREAS, the rates of diseases and conditions linked to environmental toxins, including cancer, asthma, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, birth defects, autism, diabetes, endometriosis, multiple chemical sensitivities, developmental disabilities and learning disorders, are escalating; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately eighty-five thousand industrial chemicals in use today, most of which have not been adequately tested for toxicity; and

WHEREAS, many New Mexicans are needlessly exposed to hazardous toxins in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities and are, therefore, suffering negative health impacts; and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of asthma in the United States has doubled in the past twenty years, with dramatic increases among children, and the state department of health estimated, in 2001, that at least ninety-one thousand seven hundred adults in the state have asthma; and

WHEREAS, the precautionary principle outlines opportunities to promote environmental justice, protect the environment and safeguard the health of all New Mexicans;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative health and human services committee be requested to assess the public health value of implementing the precautionary principle in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative health and human services committee hear testimony from members of the public and from appropriate institutions and agencies, including the state departments of health and environment, on the precautionary principle, as it may apply in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative health and human services committee submit a report on its findings to the governor and to the legislature no later than December 2004; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the legislative health and human services committee and the state departments of health and environment.