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CITY OF SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-4

INTRODUCED BY:

Councilor Carol Romero-Wirth

Councilor Jamie Cassutt-Sanchez

Councilor Renee Villarreal

A RESOLUTION

IN SUPPORT OF THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS BY THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATURE FOR NEW MEXICO-GROWN FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR SCHOOL AND SENIOR MEALS PROGRAMS AND RELATED EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS AND FARMERS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a vibrant food and farming culture that is significant to its rural economies and provides employment opportunities on farms and in the direct, wholesale, and retail markets, as well as in food processing, distribution, and value-added businesses, all while adding to the health and well-being of New Mexicans; and

WHEREAS, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017 (“Census”), 1,538 New Mexico farmers sold \$98 million of vegetables and melons and \$210 million of fruits, nuts, and berries in 2017; and

WHEREAS, if each resident of New Mexico purchases \$5 of food each week directly from a New Mexico farm, farmers will earn an additional \$544 million annually, which, according to the Census, is equal to what New Mexico farmers currently earn in net cash income by selling

1 crops and livestock; and

2 **WHEREAS**, that same study estimated that the annual cost to feed people experiencing
3 food insecurity in New Mexico would be \$158,536,000, at an average cost of \$2.87 per meal; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the study also states that 12.4 percent of Santa Fe County residents, or
5 approximately 18,000 people, experience food insecurity; and

6 **WHEREAS**, additionally it was estimated that the annual cost to feed people experiencing
7 food insecurity in Santa Fe County is \$10,499,000, at an average cost of \$3.36 per meal; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the Feeding America study also shows that, in New Mexico, approximately
9 98,000 seniors fall below 185 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines, and approximately
10 56,000 seniors fall below 130 percent the federal poverty income guidelines; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the National School Lunch Program makes it possible for all school children
12 in the United States to receive a nutritious lunch every school day; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Feeding America, in its 2019 study, found that many children consume at
14 least one-half of their daily calories at school and, for many, food served at school is the only meal
15 they eat daily;

16 **WHEREAS**, according to the New Mexico Public Education Department (“PED”),
17 approximately 333,300 students are enrolled in New Mexico schools and can participate in the
18 school meal programs operated by various schools throughout the state, and more than 241,400 of
19 these students -- 72 percent -- are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the Food Service Director for the Santa Fe Public Schools has stated that
21 more than 16,000 students in Santa Fe County and the City of Santa Fe participate in the school
22 meal program; and

23 **WHEREAS**, in 2019 the New Mexico School Nutrition Association found that local
24 school meal programs have seen costs for food purchases increase by of an average of 25 cents to
25 75 cents per meal, with the cost of fruits and vegetables representing as much as a quarter of the

1 increased cost; and

2 **WHEREAS**, information from PED shows that the National School Lunch Program
3 provides a reimbursement of \$3.31 for free lunches, \$2.91 for reduced-priced lunches; and \$0.39
4 for fully paid lunches; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the National School Lunch Program provides a reimbursement of \$1.79 for
6 free breakfasts, \$1.49 for reduced-price breakfasts, and \$0.31 for fully paid breakfasts; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the purchase of New Mexico grown fruits and vegetables will enhance the
8 diet of school children and seniors and help school and senior meal programs comply with federal
9 rules that require fruits and vegetables on meal plates; and

10 **WHEREAS**, there is an agricultural sector of fruit and vegetable farmers that can respond
11 to these new food markets for local produce in the school and senior meal programs, as well as in
12 grocery stores; and

13 **WHEREAS**, food and agriculture education programs and experiential learning are key to
14 increasing student access to and relationships with fresh and local produce, as well as to introducing
15 students to possible career paths; and

16 **WHEREAS**, increased funding from the State Legislature enables senior and school meal
17 programs and local school districts to purchase New Mexico-grown produce, serve more fresh
18 fruits and vegetables to Santa Fe's children and seniors for their health and well-being, provide
19 related educational materials and experiential learning opportunities, and support economic
20 development and opportunities for local farmers.

21 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Governing Body joins the Board of
22 County Commission of Santa Fe, the City and County Advisory Council on Food Policy, New
23 Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council, New Mexico School Nutrition Association, and other
24 agencies and organizations, in requesting that the New Mexico State Legislature appropriate funds
25 to support New Mexico-grown fresh fruits and vegetables for school and senior meals programs,