

**MINUTES  
of the  
SECOND MEETING  
of the  
INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**July 13-14, 2023  
Inn of the Mountain Gods  
287 Carrizo Canyon Road  
Mescalero**

The second meeting of the Indian Affairs Committee was called to order by Senator Shannon D. Pinto, vice chair, on July 13, 2023 at 10:28 a.m. in the Mescalero Ballroom and Exhibit Hall at the Inn of the Mountain Gods in Mescalero.

**Present**

Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, Chair  
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto, Vice Chair  
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon  
Rep. Anthony Allison  
Rep. John Block  
Rep. Charlotte Little  
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna  
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle  
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez  
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez

**Absent**

Rep. Tara Jaramillo  
Sen. Bill B. O'Neill  
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero  
Sen. William E. Sharer  
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.  
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

**Advisory Members**

Sen. Linda M. Lopez (7/13)  
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson

Rep. Gail Chasey  
Rep. Harry Garcia  
Sen. Stuart Ingle  
Rep. Derrick J. Lente  
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom  
Sen. Michael Padilla  
Sen. William P. Soules

**Guest Legislator**

Sen. Ron Griggs (7/14)

(Attendance dates are noted for those members not present for the entire meeting.)

**Staff**

Lenaya Montoya, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)  
Markela Clinton, Committee Coordinator, LCS  
Nicole Waguespack, Researcher, LCS  
Angela Dakan, Staff, LCS

## **Guests**

The guest list is in the meeting file.

## **Handouts**

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

## **References to Webcast**

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at [www.nmlegis.gov](http://www.nmlegis.gov), under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

## **Thursday, July 13**

### **Welcome and Introductions (10:28 a.m.)**

Senator Pinto welcomed everyone, and members of the committee, staff and audience introduced themselves.

### **Welcome and Status Update (10:36 a.m.)**

Duane Duffy, secretary, Tribal Council, Mescalero Apache Tribe, presented on the tribal-owned enterprises and economic and infrastructure development in Mescalero, including the Inn of the Mountain Gods, Ski Apache, Mescalero Gas Company and Mescalero Apache Telecom, Inc., and highlighted the tribe's economic contributions to New Mexico and surrounding areas. He described challenges the tribe has encountered, including those that resulted from or were exacerbated by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, and how the tribe is responding through existing member services, community partnerships, quality-of-life projects and future economic development. He also highlighted the tribe's aggressive forest management plan, Historic Preservation Office, health care centers and services, youth programs and housing projects. The presentation can be found here:

[https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20071323%20Item%201%20MAT%20Welcome%20P  
resentation.pdf](https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20071323%20Item%201%20MAT%20Welcome%20Presentation.pdf).

### **Update from the State Land Office (12:08 p.m.)**

Rachael N. Lorenzo, assistant commissioner of cultural resources, State Land Office, presented on the office's purpose and its mission to fund public schools, colleges and hospitals, among other state beneficiaries. She stated that the Cultural Resources Office (CRO) hopes to expand so that it can fulfil the goals of protecting cultural properties before irreparable harm is done, holding oil and gas companies accountable for abandoned wells and cultivating relationships with tribes and lessees to mitigate harm to significant cultural resources. She discussed the CRO's core responsibilities, which include collaboration with lessees and the aerospace company Planet to monitor and investigate mineral theft, trespass and oil spills. The presentation can be found here:

[https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20071323%20Item%202%20NMSLO%20presentation  
.pdf](https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20071323%20Item%202%20NMSLO%20presentation.pdf).

### **Update from the Indian Resources Development Program (IRD) at New Mexico State University (NMSU) (1:24 p.m.)**

Dr. Claudia Trueblood, director, IRD, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES), NMSU, and Cherylin Atcitty, senior program specialist, IRD, ACES, NMSU, presented an update on the IRD's mission and its work to connect tribal nations, schools, governments and businesses to build career pathways through economic development programs and experiential learning opportunities such as internships and research experiences. Dr. Trueblood outlined recommendations for improving the IRD, which include hiring a full-time program specialist at the Farmington campus; updating Chapter 21, Article 10 NMSA 1978 to clarify language and add additional members to the program's advisory committee; and creating an endowment fund to help expand the IRD's services. She also encouraged feedback on House Bill 280 (2023) and asked how the IRD could partner with the technical assistance centers established in the bill. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20071323%20Item%203%20NMSU%20IRD%20presentation.pdf>.

On a motion made and seconded, the committee voted to send a letter to the Legislative Finance Committee in support of a budget increase for the IRD. Senator Pinto voiced her hope to have amendments drafted per the IRD's recommendations to Chapter 21, Article 10 NMSA 1978 by the end of the 2023 interim.

### **Approval of Minutes (2:08 p.m.)**

On a motion made and seconded and without opposition, the committee voted to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2023 meeting.

### **Update from NMSU on Accessibility of Online Courses in Tribal Communities (2:11 p.m.)**

Dr. Sherry Kollmann, associate vice chancellor, Digital Learning, NMSU, presented on NMSU's Global Campus, which is a program for expanding access to online education and includes the use of virtual devices to tour campuses, take online courses and obtain job training, especially for dangerous occupations. The Global Campus has more than 70 online accredited degree programs and microlearning courses and evaluates students based on their current knowledge, not on standardized test scores. She stated that the Global Campus is being built out to connect all NMSU branch campuses so that students don't have to move or travel to get an advanced degree or further their job skills. She also explained that the current diverse student population is not represented in the faculty and more access to master's and terminal degrees for tribal populations and people of color is needed. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20071323%20Item%204%20NMSU%20Global%20presentation.pdf>.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Recess**

The committee recessed at 2:47 p.m.

## **Friday, July 14**

### **Reconvene (9:28 a.m.)**

The committee reconvened, and Senator Griggs introduced himself as a guest legislator.

### **Presentation on the 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Mescalero Apache Tribe (9:30 a.m.)**

Mr. Duffy and Jacob Daukei, council member and deputy historic preservation officer, Mescalero Apache Tribe, presented on the history of the tribe, which represents the Mescalero, Lipan and Chiricahua bands of Apache and is well-known for its sustainable forestry management practices and its large cattle ranch operation, big game hunting program, culture- and language-preservation programs and connection to its homelands. The sesquicentennial for the establishment of the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation took place on May 28-29, 2023 and included a parade, dances, contests and games, traditional fire starting and prayers for the reservation to continue to thrive. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20071323%20Item%205%20MAT%20150th%20Anniversary%20Presentation.pdf>.

### **Recess**

The meeting recessed at 10:15 a.m.

### **Tour of the Mescalero Apache Reservation (11:25 a.m.)**

Members of the Tribal Council led the committee on a tour of the reservation, which included road construction projects, an affordable rent-to-own housing development, the plot of a future 40-unit supportive housing project for homeless single adults, an adult detention center that is now under construction and the reservation's main fire station, which is one of a handful of tribal fire stations in the state and serves nontribal populations as well. On the return journey, Mr. Duffy pointed out the last of the internet fiber lines being placed, which once completed will secure 100 percent broadband access to tribal members.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.