

**MINUTES  
of the  
THIRD MEETING  
of the  
WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**August 7-9, 2023  
San Juan College  
School of Energy, Merrion Room  
5301 College Boulevard  
Farmington**

The third meeting of the Water and Natural Resources Committee was called to order by Senator Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics, chair, on Monday, August 7, 2023, at 10:12 a.m. at the School of Energy at San Juan College (SJC) in Farmington.

**Present**

Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics, Chair  
Rep. Matthew McQueen, Vice Chair (8/7, 8/8)  
Sen. Pete Campos  
Rep. T. Ryan Lane  
Rep. Tara L. Lujan (8/7, 8/8)  
Rep. Kristina Ortez (8/7, 8/8)  
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.  
Sen. Pat Woods  
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

**Absent**

Rep. Gail Armstrong  
Rep. Kathleen Cates  
Sen. Joseph Cervantes  
Rep. Joanne J. Ferrary  
Rep. Miguel P. García  
Rep. Susan K. Herrera  
Sen. Stuart Ingle  
Rep. Marian Matthews  
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle  
Rep. Andrea Romero  
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana  
Rep. Larry R. Scott  
Sen. Jeff Steinborn

**Advisory Members**

Rep. Jack Chatfield  
Rep. Rod Montoya  
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto (8/7)  
Rep. William "Bill" R. Rehm  
Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez

Rep. Christine Chandler  
Sen. Crystal Diamond Brantley  
Rep. Candy Spence Ezzell  
Rep. Jenifer Jones  
Sen. Linda M. Lopez  
Rep. Greg Nibert  
Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino  
Rep. G. Andrés Romero  
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero  
Rep. Nathan P. Small  
Sen. Mimi Stewart  
Sen. Peter Wirth

**Guest Legislators**

Rep. Anthony Allison (8/7, 8/8)

Rep. Mark Duncan (8/9)

Sen. Steven P. Neville (8/8, 8/9)

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

**Staff**

Erika Falance, Interim Committee Coordinator, Legislative Council Service (LCS)

Sheila Keleher, Researcher, LCS

Tom Kricka, Staff Attorney, LCS

Sara Wiedmaier, Researcher, 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.

**Monday, August 7****Welcome and Introductions (10:12 a.m.)**

Senator Stefanics and committee members introduced themselves, shared their love of San Juan County and thanked the School of Energy at SJC for their hospitality.

**Welcome and Updates from the City of Farmington and San Juan County (10:19 a.m.)**

Nate Duckett, mayor, City of Farmington, and Mike Stark, manager, San Juan County, provided a presentation on the water levels in local lakes, the economic landscape changes in San Juan County, population and employment trends in San Juan County and current projects taking place within the county. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/WNR%20080723%20Item%201%20San%20Juan%20County.pdf>.

**Welcome and Updates on Navajo Nation Infrastructure (11:23 a.m.)**

Patrick J. Sandoval, chief of staff, Office of the President, Navajo Nation; Arvin Trujillo, executive administrator, Office of the President, Navajo Nation; and Srinivasa "Veni" Venigalla,

P.E., deputy general manager, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, provided a presentation on living conditions on the Navajo Nation, the Light Up Navajo program and opportunities to bring power and water to those living on the Navajo Nation in the future. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=2>.

#### **Welcome and Updates on SJC School of Energy Programs and Tour (12:46 p.m.)**

Toni Pendergrass, Ph.D., president, SJC, and Alicia Corbell, dean, School of Energy, SJC, gave information about the student population of SJC, including its demographics, degrees offered and statistics involving the School of Energy. Committee members toured the School of Energy. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=3>.

#### **Department of Game and Fish (DGF): Legislative Priorities, Budget and Staffing Update and Role in the 30x30 Initiative (1:53 p.m.)**

Michael Sloane, director, DGF, provided a presentation on the state of the DGF, including the necessity for a hunting and fishing license fee increase to continue operating at the current level.

#### **Public Stream Access and Ruling on Private Land Restrictions (2:44 p.m.)**

Mr. Sloane; James Grayson, chief deputy attorney general, Office of the Attorney General; and Jesse Deubel, executive director, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, provided a presentation on the challenges, legalities and future possibilities of ensuring public access to public waters, as promised by the Constitution of New Mexico and New Mexico Supreme Court rulings. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=5>.

#### **Strategic Water Reserve and Environmental Flows: Ensuring Compact Compliance and Protecting Endangered Species (3:40 p.m.)**

Hannah Riseley-White, director, Interstate Stream Commission; Anjali Bean, healthy rivers senior policy analyst, Western Resource Advocates; and Aaron Chavez, executive director, San Juan Water Commission, provided presentations on water and wildlife recovery and the benefits of that recovery to the environment and recreation. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=6>.

**Public Comment (4:27 p.m.)**

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

**Recess**

The meeting recessed at 5:04 p.m.

**Tuesday, August 8****Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 10:30 a.m.

**Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Update (10:30 a.m.)**

Ryan Gladde, P.E., deputy construction engineer, United States Bureau of Reclamation; Mike Hamman, P.E., state engineer, Office of the State Engineer; and Jason John, director, Department of Water Resources, Navajo Nation, provided a presentation with updates on the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=7>.

**Local to Regional Water Resiliency: Colorado River 101 and Basin Agreement, San Juan-Chama and Animas-La Plata Project Updates (11:29 a.m.)**

Estevan Lopez, commissioner, Upper Colorado River Commission; Mr. Hamman; and Mr. Chavez provided updates on the aforementioned projects. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=8>.

**Public Comment (1:22 p.m.)**

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

**Approval of Minutes (1:38 p.m.)**

Upon a motion made by Senator Campos and seconded by Representative Lujan, the committee approved the minutes of the July 10-11, 2023 meeting.

**Aquifer Mapping Program Update: Characterization and Monitoring (1:39 p.m.)**

Stacy Timmons, associate director, Hydrogeology, Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMIMT); Laila Sturgis, aquifer mapping program manager, Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, NMIMT; Patrick McCarthy, water policy officer, Thornburg Foundation; and Maurice Hall, Ph.D., vice president, Climate Resilient Water Systems, Environmental Defense Fund, provided a presentation on ground water resilience, NMIMT's aquifer mapping program and recommendations for ground water management. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=9>.

**Innovations In and Out of the Oil Field: Local Energy Sector Public-Private Partnerships (2:52 p.m.)**

Jim Rhodes, senior vice president and head of engineering, Process Equipment and Service Company, Inc. (PESCO); Robert Balch, Ph.D., director, Petroleum Recovery Research Center, NMIMT; Colleen W. Bowman, Ed.D., provost, Navajo Technical University; and Jay Paul McWilliams, chief executive officer (CEO), LOGOS Energy, provided company overviews for LOGOS Energy and PESCO and reported on water research at the Petroleum Recovery Research Center. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=10>.

**Hydrogen Development: Western Inter-States Hydrogen Hub, Green and Blue Hydrogen, Opportunities and Concerns (4:09 p.m.)**

Claudia Borchert, climate change bureau chief, Department of Environment (NMED); Luis Cifuentes, Ph.D., vice president for research, New Mexico State University; Matthew Gonzales, vice president of advocacy and communications, Four Corners Clean Energy Alliance; Noah Long, director, Western Region Climate and Clean Energy Program, Natural Resources Defense Council; Luis A. Reyes, Jr., CEO, Kit Carson Electric Cooperative; and Jessica Keetso, organizer, Tó Nizhóní Ání "Sacred Water Speaks", provided a presentation on hydrogen development at several organizations throughout the state. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=11>.

**Recess**

The meeting recessed at 5:45 p.m.

**Wednesday, August 9**

**Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 9:08 a.m.

**The Decommissioning Process and Update on San Juan Generating Station Facility and Mine Remediation and Restoration Study Act (9:09 a.m.)**

Tony Skrelunas, executive director, Division of Economic Development, Navajo Nation; Sarah Cottrell Propst, secretary, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department; Jason Herman, pollution prevention section manager, Ground Water Quality Bureau, NMED; and Brent Heffington, managing director of generation, Public Service Company of New Mexico, provided updates on the San Juan Generating Station and Mine remediation and renewable energy projects. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=12>.

**Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund Implementation and Impact (10:37 a.m.)**

Secretary Cottrell Propst; Kate Lacey, river stewardship program coordinator, Surface Water Quality Bureau, NMED; Carl Colonius, New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, Economic Development Department; and Josue de Luna, climate policy innovator, The Semilla Project, provided a presentation on the programs and state agencies impacted by the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, as well as information about the NMED River Stewardship Program. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=8/7/2023&ItemNumber=13>.

**Public Comment (11:21 a.m.)**

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.