

MINUTES
of the
SECOND MEETING
of the
WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

July 22-23, 2024
WORKforce Training Center, Room 207
Central New Mexico Community College
5600 Eagle Rock Avenue NE
Albuquerque

The second meeting of the Water and Natural Resources Committee was called to order by Representative Matthew McQueen, chair, on July 22, 2024 at 9:07 a.m. in Room 207 of the WORKforce Training Center at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) in Albuquerque.

Present

Rep. Matthew McQueen, Chair
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics, Vice Chair
Rep. Gail Armstrong
Sen. Pete Campos
Rep. Kathleen Cates
Rep. Miguel P. García (7/22)
Rep. Susan K. Herrera (7/23)
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Marian Matthews
Rep. Kristina Ortez
Rep. Andrea Romero
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana
Rep. Larry R. Scott
Sen. Pat Woods
Rep. Martin R. Zamora (7/22)

Advisory Members

Rep. Christine Chandler
Sen. Linda M. López
Rep. Cristina Parajón (7/23)
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto (7/23)
Rep. William "Bill" R. Rehm
Sen. Mimi Stewart (7/22)

Absent

Sen. Joseph Cervantes
Rep. Joanne J. Ferrary
Sen. Steven McCutcheon II
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.

Sen. Crystal Brantley
Rep. Jack Chatfield
Rep. Candy Spence Ezzell
Rep. Jenifer Jones
Rep. Rod Montoya
Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. G. Andrés Romero
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez
Rep. Nathan P. Small

Sen. Jeff Steinborn
Sen. Peter Wirth

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

Staff

Sara Wiedmaier, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Tom Kricka, Staff Attorney, LCS
Angela Dakan, Staff, LCS
Andrea Martinez Cordero, Intern, 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 recorded webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at 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, July 22

Welcome and Introductions (9:07 a.m.)

Representative McQueen welcomed everyone, and committee members introduced themselves.

Welcome to CNM (9:23 a.m.)

Tracy Hartzler, president, CNM, welcomed the committee and highlighted CNM's workforce training for the development of technologies and projects focused on the San Juan and Rio Grande watersheds through a National Science Foundation grant for water and energy security transformation. These programs will benefit the state's goal of protecting water assets while growing essential agribusiness industries.

Climate Change: Overview of Current Science, Policy and Monitoring (9:42 a.m.)

Dave DuBois, Ph.D., state climatologist, presented on the data sources the state uses to determine trends in climate-change-related weather events such as increased temperatures, droughts, dust storms, heat waves and wildfires. He described ZiaMet, a statewide network of automated weather stations, and stressed the need to install more stations to help fill in data gaps.

Claudia Borchert, chief, Climate Change Bureau, Environmental Protection Division (EPD), Department of Environment (NMED), talked about the state's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) inventory, which measures the state's progress toward its goal of reducing emissions by 45% from 2005 levels by 2030. She discussed the clean fuel transportation standard program and the use of federal funds to address climate change and air quality while expanding the economy and growing quality jobs.

Charles Goodmacher, policy advisor, Healthy Climate New Mexico, presented on the public health impacts of climate change and the challenges with environmental data that affect response efforts related to environmental emergencies. His recommendations included better data reporting on deaths related to wildfires and other climate events and establishing occupational air quality standards.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=2>.

Climate Change: Health and Economic Impacts (11:10 a.m.)

Susan Nedell, mountain west advocate, E2, presented about the economic impacts of climate disasters and the sectors that are seeing growth in clean energy jobs. She noted that clean energy jobs pay 25% more than the national median wage and that opportunities for the workforce and entrepreneurs in the clean energy economy are growing.

Laura Paskus, senior producer, New Mexico PBS, spoke about the long-term economic and public health impacts, including mental health impacts, of climate-related events and stated the need for better accounting of impacts from the oil and gas industry.

Laura McCarthy, state forester, Forestry Division, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), presented statistics on wildfires in the state and discussed options for mitigating wildfire damage, including developing a wildfire risk map, updating building codes, retrofitting homes and updating the fire planning task force membership.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=3>.

Strategies to Mitigate Climate Change (1:04 p.m.)

Rebecca "Puck" Stair, director, Energy Conservation and Management Division, EMNRD, talked about the governor's Climate Change Task Force, the federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant and mitigation efforts to reach the state's emissions-reduction targets.

Patrick O'Connell, chair, Public Regulation Commission (PRC), presented the PRC's *2024 Report to the Legislature on the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS)* and discussed barriers to achieving the RPS, including utility compliance and supply-chain, technology innovation and diversification issues. Despite this, he said that the RPS program is expected to successfully reach the next major milestone of 40% renewable energy production in 2025.

Ryan Parks, deputy director, Public School Facilities Authority, talked about how public schools can help reduce GHGs by renovating existing buildings, using sustainable materials for new construction, designing with future renovations in mind and installing photovoltaic and high-performance building envelope systems.

Tammy Fiebelkorn, government affairs manager, Western Resources Advocates, discussed the state's tax credits that incentivize decarbonization, including the clean car tax credits, and ways to make the credits more effective.

Michael Bueno, senior manager, State Climate Policy and Strategy, Environmental Defense Fund, spoke about public support in New Mexico for an aggressive state climate change policy, the critical role that states play in ensuring a safer climate future for the nation and the leveraging of federal investments.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=4>.

Extreme Heat and Public Health (2:28 p.m.)

Lauren Reichelt, director, Environmental Health Division, NMED, detailed the rising number of heat-related emergencies and deaths and the impacts of extreme heat on workers, businesses and health care systems. She explained that statistics on heat-related events are incomplete due to chronic or delayed impacts that are not recognized as heat related in emergency rooms. She discussed how businesses can reduce heat-related emergencies and how the legislature can help the state gather better data on this issue.

Nathaniel Matthews-Trigg, associate director, Climate and Disaster Resilience, AmeriCares, and board member, Healthy Climate New Mexico, talked about combating heat-related deaths by identifying vulnerable populations and barriers to protection. He recommended requiring evidence-based safety protocols for high-risk occupations, modernizing public health surveillance systems, developing community cooling programs and preparing for concurrent hazards.

Shelley Mann-Lev, executive director, Healthy Climate New Mexico, discussed the importance of using legislation to address extreme heat and described proposed legislation that would create a climate resiliency fund and programs at the Department of Health to support climate-related public health actions and improve interagency collaboration.

Gerilyn Antonio, tribal liaison, New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils, discussed heat-related public health issues experienced by counties and tribal communities and initiatives to address those issues. She said that challenges for health councils include collecting climate-related health data from tribal communities and lack of full-time staff with technical expertise in climate-related emergency response planning.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=5>.

Air Quality: Emissions, Smoke, Dust and Health (3:09 p.m.)

JoAnna Strother, senior director, Advocacy-Southwest, American Lung Association (ALA), presented the ALA's 2024 national air quality report card and noted the key findings for New Mexico and ways individuals can protect themselves.

Maxine Paul, former chair, Albuquerque Air Quality Control Board, discussed how the new clean cars and trucks rules can reduce GHGs and provide other societal benefits. She also spoke of the need for a faster buildout of electric vehicle (EV) charging networks in rural areas and rebates to incentivize the purchase of EVs.

Dana Bahar, deputy director, EPD, NMED, presented fire, smoke and methane emissions maps and talked about the challenge of staffing capacity at the EPD, which has not grown with the permitting workload, so the division has been relying on contract workers to fulfill its statutory and regulatory duties.

Brandon Edwards, Jornada Experimental Range, New Mexico State University (NMSU), spoke about how wind erosion and dust emission is exacerbated by transitions in rangeland vegetation and how pervasive changes exacerbate extreme climate events. He described some tools to address wind erosion and said that with data-driven management and effective restoration, there is potential for dust reduction.

Matthew Hurteau, Ph.D., professor of quantitative ecology, University of New Mexico, and director, Center for Fire Resilient Ecosystems and Society, talked about the differences between prescribed fire and wildfire impacts to human and forest health. He said that prescribed fires are essential to manage the amount of fuel, timing of ignition and area burned and thereby reduce smoke pollution and health impacts overall.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=6>.

Waste Reduction, Recycling and Producer Responsibility (4:21 p.m.)

Shirlene Sitton, chief, Solid Waste Bureau, NMED, spoke about the bureau's main functions and funding and staffing needs. She said that the bureau is working on updating the state's solid waste management plan and legislative proposals that include producer responsibility in product management through a product's lifecycle.

Sarah Pierpont, executive director, New Mexico Recycling Coalition, talked about the issue of low-value plastics in the recycling process. She recommended passing a single-use-plastic prevention law that bans the most egregious single-use plastic items and the sale of toxic items such as mercury-containing light bulbs, which are hazardous to workers.

Stephanie Levy, co-founder, Beyond Plastics Santa Fe, and co-chair, Eldorado/285 Recycles, discussed chemicals found in plastic products, concerns about microplastics and why chemical recycling is ineffective and can be harmful to workers and communities. She recommended that the state impose plastic reduction measures and incentivize residents to reduce consumption.

Dawn Dewey, president and owner, Soilutions, presented on Soilutions's operation that diverts organic waste from landfills and transforms it into compost, soil and mulch. She said that they partner with corporations such as Walmart to divert large amounts of food waste but currently need more yard waste for the proper compost ratio and that a ban on yard debris going into the landfill would help their efforts.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=7>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 5:28 p.m.

Tuesday, July 23

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:06 a.m.

Overview of New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy (9:07 a.m.)

Kendal Chavez, food and hunger advisor, Office of the Governor, presented on the interagency initiatives related to the state's food system. She stated key priorities that include promoting the New Mexico Grown and Universal School Meals programs and the funding and longevity of community food-access programs.

Jason New, division director, Marketing and Development, New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA), gave an overview of the agriculture industry, the division's role in publishing production data and challenges, including drought, workforce, broadband access, production costs and the shortage of veterinarians in rural areas. He discussed food initiatives and other ways that the NMDA is working to create a resilient food system.

Erin Ortigoza, manager, Food, Hunger and Agriculture Program, Economic Development Department, talked about the mission and target industries of the program, which include small- to mid-scale farms and value-added agriculture operations. She described funding sources and provided a spotlight of recent awardees of the Healthy Food Financing Fund.

Susan Wilger, past chair, New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council, talked about the *Food Charter Report Card for 2023-2024*, which evaluates the impacts of food policies and programs over time. She listed legislative priorities of the council and existing programs that support food security and promote nutrient-rich, locally grown foods.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=8>.

Local Food Production and Food Security (10:16 a.m.)

Denise Miller, executive director, New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association, presented on the Double Up Food Bucks program, the FreshRx produce prescription program and the New Mexico Grown Approved Supplier Program, all of which support farmers, ranchers and food producers and nutrition access for vulnerable populations.

Manny Encinas, Encinas Family Ranch, and executive director, Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute, spoke about the institute's focus on equitable access to locally grown food and the benefits of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Double Up Food Bucks program. He said the institute plans to continue partnering with state and federal agencies to provide more access to fresh, locally grown food.

Bryce Townsend, Black Mesa Farm, Pueblo of San Felipe, spoke about his fourth-generation family farm, discussed logistics of the FreshRx program and described how his farm and other partners were able to deliver food packages to 10 pueblo communities in the first two years of participation in the program.

Meredith Lorencz, specialist, Local Food Procurement Project, The Food Depot, spoke about the Regional Farm to Food Bank program, a federally funded program that provides economic support to regional small- to mid-scale food producers to supply local emergency food networks that has received national recognition for maintaining advantageous pricing for farmers and has improved retention of more locally produced food within the state.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=9>.

Soils, Farms and Agricultural Workforce Development (11:11 a.m.)

Katie Goetz, co-lead, Healthy Soil Program, NMDA, discussed the role of the Healthy Soil Program in promoting farming, ranching and other land management approaches that improve the health, yield and profitability of the soils of the state. The program provides grants, soil assessments, research, education and capacity building for eligible entities.

Marcos Valdez, district manager, East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District, discussed programs such as a farm equipment rental program, noxious weed control program and youth mapping project. He listed some challenges for the conservation district that include the need for more field staff and administrative support for grant funding.

James Skeet, executive director, Spirit Farm, spoke about incorporating indigenous and regenerative practices into growing food and the connection between soil health and nutrient levels in produce. He explained the importance of amending soil with microbial-rich compost

and biochar to develop fertile soils, using cover crops, fermenting animal feed and applying ancient wisdom while embracing innovation to keep soils healthy and grow nutritious food.

Zach Withers, co-owner, Polk's Folly Farm, talked about his small-scale livestock production farm and local food store in Cedar Crest. He echoed the importance of connecting agriculture with ecosystem management and programs that help farmers choose conservation as a standard and produce food in a way that builds soil health and protects natural resources. He recommended providing more funding for agricultural programs, loosening Anti-Donation Clause barriers, increasing market access for local meat producers and supporting compost and biochar production at the state and municipal levels.

Brandon Devine, program operations director, FFA/Agricultural Education, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, NMSU, talked about the model of school-based agricultural education that includes classroom learning, work-based learning and leadership, personal growth and career development. He said that there is a higher graduation rate among students involved in career and technical education and more than 300 unique careers in agriculture for which the college is preparing students. He recommended funding agriculture education and expressed the need for more meat processing laboratories to provide hands-on learning to students.

The presentation materials can be found here: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=WNR&Date=7/22/2024&ItemNumber=10>.

Approval of Minutes (12:28 p.m.)

Upon a motion made and seconded, and with no objections, the committee approved the minutes of the May 28, 2024 meeting.

Public Comment (12:29 p.m.)

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

Working Lunch and Tours of Corrales Farms: Wagner, Silver Leaf and Indigenous Farm Hub (12:43 p.m.)

Committee members toured farms in Corrales and heard about issues related to water infrastructure, growing food for local schools and community-supported agriculture.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.