

**2024 APPROVED
WORK PLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE
for the
WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

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Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino	Sen. Jeff Steinborn
Rep. Cristina Parajón	Sen. Mimi Stewart
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto	Sen. Peter Wirth

Approved Work Plan

The Water and Natural Resources Committee (WNRC) was created by the New Mexico Legislative Council on March 25, 2024. The committee will focus on the following topics, as scheduling permits:

A. topics concerning energy, including:

1. Oil and Gas Act violations, lawsuits, penalty amounts and proposed changes;
2. establishing in statute the 98% gas capture requirement for oil and gas permits;
3. allowing for surface setbacks for oil and gas wells;
4. increasing bonding, fee and civil penalty amounts in oil and gas operations;
5. increasing rules and limits on well transfers between oil and gas operators;

6. water use and tracking in oil and gas operations, including fresh water use vs. produced water reuse, on-site and off-site use and compliance with the Produced Water Act;
7. the role of the legislature in the public and private development of hydrogen;
8. an update on the green hydrogen power plant at the Chevron Questa Mine site;
9. Energy Transition Act updates, including progress, compliance and enforcement of Public Regulation Commission regulations;
10. energy transition issues such as securing rare earth minerals and impacts to land;
11. recycling options for solar and wind projects;
12. pore space ownership and the potential to use pore space for carbon sequestration;
13. the solar tax credit application process and the funding and sustainability of the program;
14. an update on the Community Solar Program and potential for expansion;
15. updates on the renewable energy production tax credits and the new advanced energy equipment tax credit;
16. tribal energy and climate issues and opportunities for federal funding;
17. effects of solar energy development on wildlife;
18. carbon capture and sequestration;
19. water use and contamination from fracking and mining operations and the potential for fracking-related earthquakes;
20. resource adequacy, energy needs and site readiness for growth of the oil and gas industry in the southeast region and development of other industries across the state;
21. an update on the electric grid and distribution needs;
22. an update on the Community Energy Efficiency Development Program; and
23. implementation, effectiveness and permanency of methane rules;

B. topics concerning water, including:

1. implementation of the Water Security Planning Act and regional water plans;
2. a review of the New Mexico state water plan 2024;
3. an update on the status, distributions and future of the New Mexico Unit Fund;
4. an update on the strategic water reserve;
5. implementation of the Water Data Act and aquifer mapping program;
6. the Low Flow Conveyance Channel;
7. enforcement of stream access rights;
8. the waters of the United States and new successes in regional planning efforts;
9. the Colorado River Compact and potential compact dispute implications;
10. potential violations of the Rio Grande Compact;
11. the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project and potential use for out-of-state Navajo Nation needs;
12. methodologies and ongoing initiatives for cleaning water;
13. an overview of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS, in our aquifers and products; potential regulatory changes to protect consumers and the environment; and ensuring compensation for contamination of private lands and wells;
14. Water Quality Act revisions, including a surface water permitting program, changes to the toxic pollutant list and federal funding to address contaminants in public water systems;
15. reports on water rights litigation and settlements, including the *Aamodt* settlement, *State of New Mexico v. Aragon* and other Indian water rights litigation and settlements and *Texas v. New Mexico*;
16. implications of the *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency* decision and the need for surface water monitoring and permitting programs;

17. "blue workforce development": building up the state's water infrastructure workforce;
18. water conservation policies and river management for urban agriculture; climate-resilient agriculture; and farmer and rancher perspectives on water;
19. an update on ground and storm water management and aquifer characterization;
20. an overview of river health and updates on the Active Water Resource Management Program and the River Stewardship Program;
21. water supply augmentation alternatives, including brackish water desalination, produced water reuse and the governor's strategic water supply;
22. cloud seeding;
23. aging infrastructure of rural water systems and associated risks;
24. water policy and infrastructure needs, implementation of Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force recommendations and creation of a state Office of Water Resource Management;
25. creation of a water futures fund or water resilience fund and funding for water emergencies; and
26. the historic and cultural roots of Zuni Salt Lake and western New Mexico water issues and strategies to restore natural habitats, soil health and water systems through application of native wisdom and traditional practices;

C. topics concerning conservation, including:

1. Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) and State Game Commission reform and fees and cattle growers' input on the NMDGF;
2. the impacts of lead bullets and tackle on wildlife;
3. a report on the development of a statewide beaver management plan as requested by Senate Memorial 4 (2014);
4. an update on the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund;
5. "species of greatest conservation need" funding and uses;
6. wildlife policy on prairie chickens and other endangered or threatened species;

7. wildlife policy on Mexican wolves, including state and federal compensation for Mexican wolf depredation;
8. wildlife policy on elk, including the "Elk Private Lands Use System" and the NMDGF four-year elk rule;
9. budget overview of the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) and proposed fee increases;
10. Department of Environment (NMED) fees and funding changes as proposed by Senate Bill 228 (2024);
11. San Juan Generating Station Facility and Mine Remediation and Restoration Study Act updates;
12. creation of a community response, investigation and remediation program and fund to address abandoned contaminated sites;
13. updates on efforts to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and establish wildlife crossings pursuant to the Wildlife Corridors Act;
14. mining proposals in the Upper Pecos watershed;
15. updates from departmental tribal liaisons on state-tribal collaborations and cross-boundary resource management;
16. wildfire mitigation planning and the risks of downed power lines;
17. updates on *Atencio v. State of New Mexico* and other natural resources-related litigation;
18. proposed changes and efforts to preserve dark skies in New Mexico;
19. impacts of pesticides, aerial spraying and neonics;
20. progress of the Rio Grande Trail Commission;
21. creation of an animal welfare trust fund; and
22. a working group report on advancing citizen science at the state agency level; and

D. topics concerning climate and other WNRC focus areas, including:

1. the public health risks posed by extreme heat and a statewide public health and climate program as proposed by House Bill 104 (2024);
2. air quality;
3. a report from the state climatologist on weather station installations;
4. updates on the status and accessibility of the climate tax credits;
5. electric and solar power for school buses and buildings;
6. sediment and debris removal after flood events related to fires and climate change;
7. the overall costs of climate change;
8. an update from the Interagency Climate Change Task Force;
9. farming and ranching opportunities for young people, including funding for National FFA Organization training programs;
10. land stewardship and economic partnership opportunities for farmers, ranchers, food hubs and businesses;
11. updates on the governor's Food Initiative, the New Mexico Grown program and the New Mexico Food Charter and annual "report card";
12. recycling and anti-littering policies to address plastic pollution; funding opportunities for cleanup; and the impacts of single-use plastics and Styrofoam;
13. Solid Waste Act modernization and an overview of solid waste management, including the net import of landfill waste and the potential to turn waste into commodities through recycling, composting and waste-to-energy industries;
14. a Green Amendment to the Constitution of New Mexico as proposed by House Joint Resolution 4 (2024) and Senate Joint Resolution 8 (2024);
15. using compost and biochar to restore soil health and retain moisture;
16. grazing practices that restore natural habitats in the desert and the need for indigenous wisdom and experience in restoration efforts; and

17. reports from water- and natural resources-related executive agencies, including the Office of the State Engineer, Office of Natural Resources Trustee, EMNRD, NMED and NMDGF, regarding statutory reporting requirements, ongoing initiatives, legislative priorities and budget and staffing needs.

**Water and Natural Resources Committee
2024 Approved Meeting Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
May 28	Santa Fe
July 22-23	Ruidoso
August 26-27	Socorro
September 26-27	Red River/Questa
October 28-29	Corrales
November 25-26	Santa Fe