

# New Mexico Department of Agriculture

## FY26 Budget Presentation

Legislative Finance Committee

December 11, 2024

Jeff Witte, Director/Secretary

Les Owen, Deputy Director/Secretary

# New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Established by the Constitution of the State of New Mexico

## ARTICLE XV. AGRICULTURE AND CONSERVATION

### Section 1. [Department of agriculture]

*There shall be a department of agriculture which shall be under the control of the board of regents of the college of agriculture and mechanic arts; and the legislature shall provide lands and funds necessary for experimental farming and demonstrating by said department.*

# Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund

*Established by the Legislature in 2023, New Mexico's Land of Enchantment (LOE) Legacy Fund makes annual distributions to six New Mexico state agencies for natural resource conservation programs.*

NMDA has fully allocated its share (\$2.81 million) of the FY25 LOE Legacy Funding to three statutory programs:

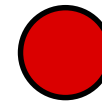
- **Soil and Water Conservation District Program:** Over \$1 million of LOE funding is supporting 31 grant-funded projects across 22 soil and water conservation districts and watershed districts. Projects include capacity building, conservation planning, landscape-scale restoration, community outreach, and education.
- **NMDA's Healthy Soil Program:** Used LOE funding to leverage \$490,000 in federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) matching funds and provided grants for projects that implement soil health practices, such as cover cropping, compost amendments, reduced tillage, and improved grazing.
- **Noxious Weeds Program:** NMDA awarded competitive grants up to \$60,000 for noxious weeds management projects by local partners and funded a statewide contract to collect noxious weeds mapping data. NMDA also captured \$275,000 of federal funding for noxious weed efforts.

# NMDA LOE Legacy Fund Grant Programs - FY25



Soil & Water Conservation District  
LOE Grant Projects

\$1.04m to 31 projects



Healthy Soil Program  
Grant Projects

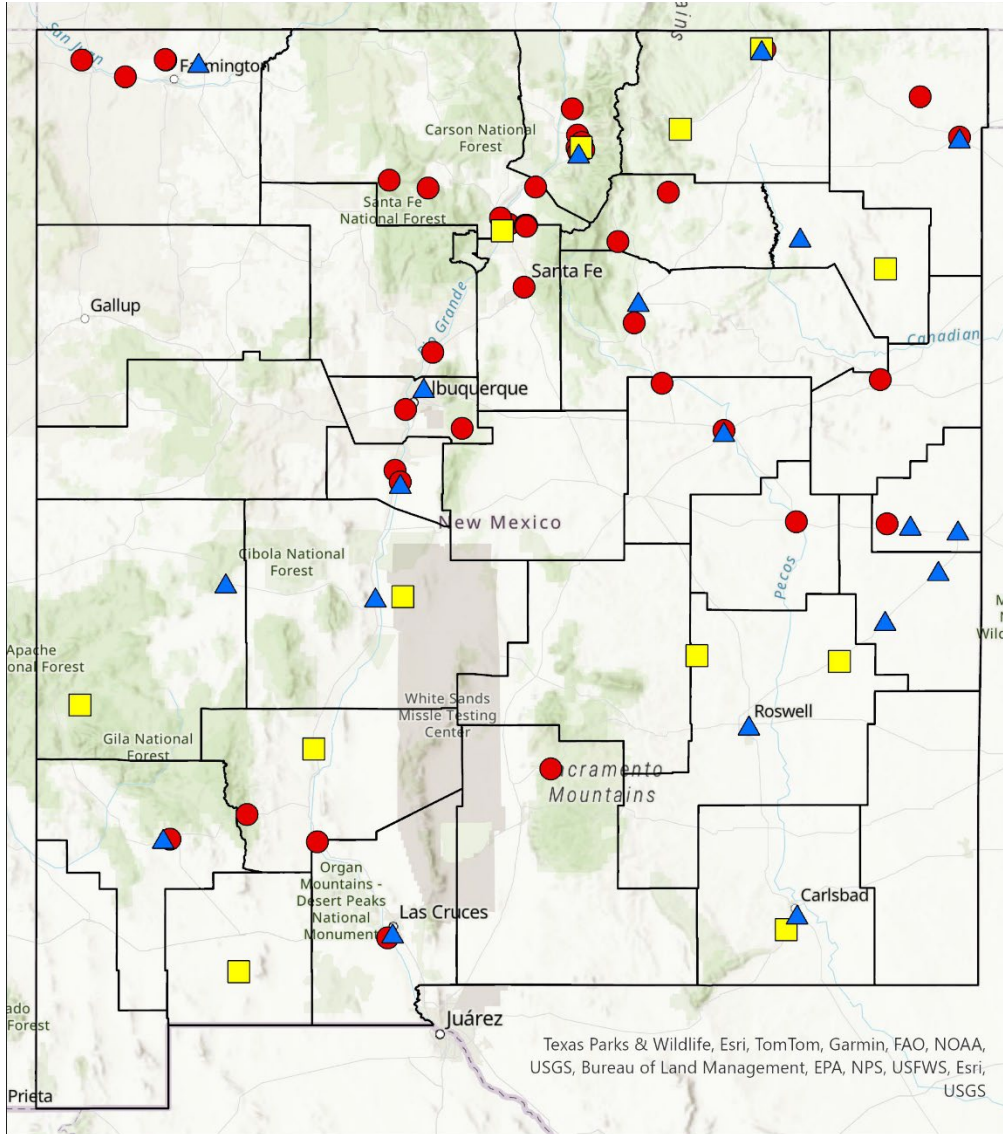
\$1.42m to 53 projects\*



Noxious Weeds Management  
Grant Program Projects

\$685k to 13 projects

\*Includes funding from other state and federal sources



Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USFWS, Esri, USGS

# Funding Description

	FY24 Actuals	FY25 Budget	FY26 Request
State Appropriation HB2			
NMDA Operations	10,654,964	11,887,665	13,105,376*
Constituent Programs	4,545,736	5,545,535	5,545,535
Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund (designated for Noxious Weeds Program, Healthy Soils Program, and Soil & Water Conservation Districts)		2,812,500	3,390,940**
One-Time Funding (HB2/SB192)			
NMDA	250,000	-	-
Constituent Programs	5,696,600	1,700,000	-
Grants and Contracts	5,941,367	10,532,687	10,532,687
Restricted Fees	6,022,017	5,600,000	5,600,000
FY26 Request (Recurring)			
Employee Health Insurance			125,000
Agricultural Water Resilience Coordinator			175,000
Compensation Parity			500,000
Acequia and Community Ditch Fund			417,711
FY26 Request (Non-Recurring)			
Value-Added Market Development and Approved Supplier Program			430,000

\*NMDA Operations plus FY26 Recurring Request of \$1,217,711

\*\*FY26 Estimated Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund

# NMDA OPERATIONS REQUESTS – FY26

## Operations Requests Total \$800,000

### ***RECURRING – AGRICULTURAL WATER RESILIENCE COORDINATOR (\$175,000)***

An expert with an irrigated agricultural background is needed to accomplish state actions outlined in the Governor’s 50 Year Water Plan and support agricultural participation in regional water planning under the Water Security Planning Act.

### ***RECURRING – COMPENSATION PARITY (\$500,000)***

In an effort to administer a strategic approach for retention management and establish parity between NMDA employees and other state agency employees, we calculated midpoint comparisons of comparable state positions.

### ***RECURRING – EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE (\$125,000)***

Health insurance costs have increased, and New Mexico Department of Agriculture is seeking additional funds to cover our portion of the increase. We have estimated the additional costs at \$125,000.

# **NMDA PARTNER PROGRAM PRIORITIES – FY26**

## **Partner Requests Total \$847,711**

### ***RECURRING – ACEQUIA AND COMMUNITY DITCH FUND NEEDS (\$417,711)***

The demands on this fund, available to the state's 14 active associations, continually exceed available monies – typically by a factor of nearly two. The requested amount would bring this fund to \$1,250,000.

### ***NON-RECURRING – VALUE-ADDED MARKET DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVED SUPPLIER PROGRAM (\$430,000)***

Increasing demands for New Mexico agricultural products have necessitated a larger investment in the New Mexico Grown Approved Supplier Program. The program helps assure fresh produce that moves through schools, early child care facilities, and senior centers, is safe, traceable, and originates from a garden or farm using sound and current food safety practices.

# QUESTIONS?

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