

**MINUTES  
of the  
FIFTH MEETING  
of the  
ECONOMIC AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

**October 11, 2023  
Bataan Hall  
University of New Mexico-Taos  
120 Civic Plaza Drive  
Taos**

**October 12, 2023  
City Council Chambers  
Los Alamos County Municipal Building  
1000 Central Avenue  
Los Alamos**

**October 13, 2023  
State Capitol, Senate Chamber  
Santa Fe**

The fifth meeting of the Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee was called to order by Senator Carrie Hamblen, chair, on October 11, 2023 at 10:35 a.m. at Bataan Hall at the University of New Mexico-Taos in Taos.

**Present**

Sen. Carrie Hamblen, Chair  
Rep. Doreen Y. Gallegos, Vice Chair  
Rep. Janelle Anyanonu  
Rep. Gail Armstrong (10/11)  
Rep. Charlotte Little  
Rep. Tara L. Lujan (10/12, 10/13)  
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom (10/13)  
Rep. Jimmy G. Mason (10/12, 10/13)  
Rep. Kristina Ortez (10/11, 10/12)  
Rep. Linda Serrato (10/12)  
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

**Advisory Members**

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon (10/11, 10/12)  
Rep. Anthony Allison  
Rep. Cynthia Borrego (10/13)  
Rep. Mark Duncan  
Rep. Pamela Herndon (10/12)  
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson (10/11, 10/12)

**Absent**

Rep. Ambrose Castellano  
Sen. Crystal Diamond Brantley  
Sen. Ron Griggs  
Sen. Siah Correa Hemphill  
Rep. Joshua N. Hernandez  
Rep. Jenifer Jones  
Sen. Antonio Maestas  
Sen. George K. Muñoz  
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle  
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.

Sen. William F. Burt  
Sen. Katy M. Duhigg  
Rep. Joy Garratt  
Rep. Susan K. Herrera  
Rep. Derrick J. Lente  
Rep. Willie D. Madrid

Rep. Rod Montoya  
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics (10/12)  
Sen. Bill Tallman (10/12)

Rep. Alan T. Martinez  
Rep. Marian Matthews  
Rep. Tanya Mirabal Moya  
Rep. William "Bill" R. Rehm  
Rep. Andrea Romero  
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero  
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez  
Rep. Reena Szczepanski

### **Guest Legislators**

Rep. Christine Chandler (10/12)  
Sen. Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales (10/11)  
Sen. Linda M. López (10/12)  
Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino (10/11)  
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez

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

### **Staff**

Erin Bond, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)  
D. Martin Fischer, Staff Attorney, LCS  
Nicole Waguespack, Researcher, LCS

### **Minutes Approval**

Because the committee will not meet again this year, the minutes for this meeting have not been officially approved by the committee.

### **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.

### **Wednesday, October 11 — Taos**

#### **Welcome and Introductions (10:35 a.m.)**

Senator Hamblen welcomed committee members and guests to the meeting.

### **Update on New Mexico's Cannabis Industry (10:41 a.m.)**

Todd Stevens, director, Cannabis Control Division, Regulation and Licensing Department, provided an update on cannabis sales, compliance and licensing, in addition to proposing legislative ideas. Ben Lewinger, executive director, New Mexico Cannabis Chamber of Commerce, discussed a historical time line of cannabis in the state, an overview of the industry, legislative priorities and future policy considerations. Dillon Gross, chief executive officer (CEO), Taos Canyon Cannabis Company, and Tony Martinez, CEO, Lava Leaf Organics, spoke about the experience of small cannabis companies and the challenges they have faced. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=10/11/2023&ItemNumber=1>.

### **Indigenous Filmmaking (12:19 p.m.)**

Geoff Kie, owner, Geoff Kie Productions, spoke about his experience as a filmmaker and an owner of a film production studio. Ramona Emerson, co-owner, Reel Indian Pictures, and Kelly Byars, co-owner, Reel Indian Pictures, discussed the challenges and opportunities for Native Americans and tribal communities in film. Peter Romero, stage manager, Camel Rock Studios, spoke about Camel Rock Studios and the discrepancies in film tax incentives.

### **Update from the New Mexico Bioscience Authority (1:34 p.m.)**

Stephanie Tofighi, executive director, New Mexico Bioscience Authority, and Paul Laur, member, New Mexico Bioscience Authority, and chief operating officer, Mercury Bio, presented on the projects and organization of the New Mexico Bioscience Authority and made a request for funding. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ERDPC%20101123%20Item%203%20Bioscience%20Authority.pdf>.

### **Developing Geothermal Energy (2:35 p.m.)**

Senator Ortiz y Pino; Tom Solomon, electrical engineer and facilitator, Geothermal Development Working Group, and co-coordinator, 350 New Mexico; and Shari Kelley, Ph.D., senior geophysicist and field geologist, Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, provided an overview of geothermal energy, the availability of geothermal resources in New Mexico and potential legislation for geothermal projects. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ERDPC%20101123%20Item%204%20Geothermal%20Energy.pdf>.

### **Distributed Energy Resources (3:29 p.m.)**

Jim DesJardins, executive director, Renewable Energy Industries Association of New Mexico, discussed the state of solar energy in New Mexico, the national solar energy situation and the role of small distributed energy resources. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ERDPC%20101123%20Item%205%20REIA%20Distributed%20Generation%20Resources.pdf>.

### **Economic Development in Taos (4:16 p.m.)**

Christopher Larsen, director, Planning, Community and Economic Development, Town of Taos; Ilona Spruce, tourism director, Pueblo of Taos; and Anthony Duran, preservation director, Pueblo of Taos, discussed the major industries, economic drivers and economic challenges and opportunities in Taos. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=10/11/2023&ItemNumber=6>.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Recess**

The meeting recessed at 4:45 p.m.

### **Thursday, October 12 — Los Alamos**

### **Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 9:19 a.m.

### **Welcome to Los Alamos County (9:21 a.m.)**

Steven Lynne, county manager, Los Alamos County, welcomed the committee to Los Alamos and provided an update on the events and economic situation in Los Alamos.

### **Update from the Workforce Solutions Department (WSD) (9:48 a.m.)**

Sarita Nair, secretary, WSD, discussed the state's unemployment rate and labor force participation, unemployment insurance, strategies for workforce recruitment and retention and the WSD's requests and challenges. The presentation can be found here:

[okhttps://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ERDPC%20101123%20Item%208%20Dept%20of%20Workforce%20Solutions.pdf](https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ERDPC%20101123%20Item%208%20Dept%20of%20Workforce%20Solutions.pdf).

### **Approval of Minutes (10:57 a.m.)**

Upon a motion made by Representative Zamora and seconded by Representative Lujan, and without any objections, the committee approved the minutes of the August 28-30, 2023

meeting. Upon a motion made by Representative Lujan and seconded by Representative Zamora, the committee approved the minutes of the September 20-22, 2023 meeting.

**Paid Family and Medical Leave (11:17 a.m.)**

Representative Serrato introduced the concept of paid family and medical leave, discussed relevant research and provided an example of how paid family and medical leave would work. Representative Chandler discussed business responses to paid family and medical leave and how Senate Bill 11 (2023) was adapted to incorporate these responses. Tracy McDaniel, policy advocate, Southwest Women's Law Center, highlighted the benefits of paid family and medical leave, described how it would work and discussed recommendations of the task force created by Senate Memorial 1 (2022). Secretary Nair discussed the anticipated economic and business impacts and economic modeling of paid family and medical leave. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ERDPC%20101123%20Item%209%20McDaniel.pdf>.

**Outdoor Recreation in Los Alamos County (2:04 p.m.)**

Anne Laurent, deputy county manager, Los Alamos County, and James Glover, founder and co-director, endeavor New Mexico, spoke about the tourism and outdoor recreation economy of Los Alamos and New Mexico. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ERDPC%20101123%20Item%2010%20endeavor%20NM.pdf>.

**Addressing Food Insecurity in New Mexico (2:59 p.m.)**

Katy Anderson, president, New Mexico Association of Food Banks, and chief programs officer, Roadrunner Food Bank, and Sherry Hooper, executive director, The Food Depot, discussed food insecurity and food support needed in New Mexico and related legislative priorities for the 2024 legislative session. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ERDPC%20101123%20Item%2011%20Food%20Bank.pdf>.

**Public Comment (4:25 p.m.)**

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

**Recess**

The meeting recessed at 4:39 p.m.

**Friday, October 13 — Santa Fe**

**Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 9:13 a.m.

### **Perspectives on Public Banking (9:25 a.m.)**

Ryan Marie Decker, policy and capital strategist, New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA), and Marquita Russel, CEO, NMFA, discussed their small business capital landscape research findings, an overview of small businesses and available funding, new NMFA programs and NMFA needs. Chris Moya, president and CEO, Independent Community Bankers Association of New Mexico; Alan Shettlesworth, president and CEO, Main Bank; Doug Stone, executive vice president, JP Stone Community Bank; John Anderson, executive vice president, New Mexico Bankers Association; Jay Jenkins, CEO, CNB Bank; and Jason Wyatt, CEO, Western Commerce Bank, spoke in opposition to a public bank and highlighted the issues with a public bank, the benefits of community banks and the adequacy of the existing banking and lending schemes. Melia Heimback, president and CEO, Credit Union Association of New Mexico, and Angela Merkert, executive director, Alliance for Local Economic Prosperity, described credit unions, the services they offer to small businesses and New Mexico's need for more financial resources that a public bank could provide. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=10/11/2023&ItemNumber=12>.

### **Consideration of Legislation for Endorsement (11:57 a.m.)**

Committee members discussed legislation for endorsement. The committee unanimously endorsed three bills, one that would create personal and corporate income tax credits for rail construction, reconstruction and replacement expenditures; one that would make an appropriation to the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to fund and provide rootstock or vines for new vineyards; and one that would make an appropriation to the Tourism Department for a high school hospitality career program. The committee unanimously endorsed a joint memorial urging New Mexico's congressional delegation to support legislation to fund the construction of a rail line and transloading facility on the Navajo Nation in the Four Corners region. The committee endorsed a bill creating a catastrophic business relief loan program, with Representative Zamora voting in the negative. The legislation endorsed by the committee can be found here:

[https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/endorsed\\_legislation?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Year=2023](https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/endorsed_legislation?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Year=2023).

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:17 p.m.