

**MINUTES
of the
FIRST MEETING
of the
RADIOACTIVE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COMMITTEE**

**June 13, 2019
State Capitol, Room 307
Santa Fe**

The first meeting of the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee was called to order by Representative Angelica Rubio, chair, on Thursday, June 13, 2019, at 1:13 p.m. in Room 307 of the State Capitol.

Present

Rep. Angelica Rubio, Chair
Sen. Jeff Steinborn, Vice Chair
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Phelps Anderson
Rep. Christine Chandler
Sen. Richard C. Martinez
Rep. Joseph L. Sanchez

Absent

Rep. Cathrynn N. Brown
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros
Sen. Ron Griggs
Sen. Gay G. Kernan
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez

Advisory Members

Sen. Gregory A. Baca
Rep. David M. Gallegos
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana

Sen. William F. Burt
Sen. Gregg Fulfer
Sen. William H. Payne
Sen. Clemente Sanchez
Rep. James G. Townsend

Staff

Shawna Casebier, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Diego Jimenez, Research Assistant, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file.

Thursday, June 13

Welcome and Introductions

Representative Rubio welcomed members of the committee and guests to the meeting. Committee members and staff introduced themselves.

New Mexico's Atomic Histories

Melanie LaBorwit, educator, New Mexico History Museum, and curator, Atomic Histories Exhibition, reviewed handouts regarding New Mexico's atomic histories and the methods used to present an objective exhibit on potentially controversial topics. On the topic of curating controversial exhibits, she explained that personal stories add depth to a presentation. The Atomic Histories Exhibition at the New Mexico History Museum utilizes art and personal items belonging to relevant individuals, such as J. Robert Oppenheimer, that are on loan from the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos and other pieces on loan from museums and archives around the state and country.

Ms. LaBorwit discussed New Mexico's historic and present involvement with atomic materials and industries and emphasized that New Mexico is the only place on earth that is part of the whole nuclear cycle.

Ms. LaBorwit discussed the historical background of the Manhattan Project and why New Mexico was selected as the site for testing and research. Upon a request to identify a location for testing and research, Dr. Oppenheimer looked to New Mexico because of its numerous, obscure and hidden communities and a personal history and fondness for the state. Because of New Mexico's role in the development of the atomic bomb, several instances of espionage have occurred within the state's borders. Ms. LaBorwit discussed the Trinity Site, trinitite and radiation exposure danger sites.

Due to New Mexico's uranium-rich areas, Ms. LaBorwit explained, the Cold War played a significant role in the development of New Mexico's economy by channeling resources through the national labs and by production from uranium mines. The Jackpile Mine, once the largest open pit mine in the United States, was a major employer. Ms. LaBorwit discussed the occupational and residual dangers of uranium mines. She noted the work of Dorothy Purley, a former uranium miner and later activist, and Tina Cordova, who testified before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee on behalf of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, in addressing these issues.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) facility in Carlsbad, New Mexico, was originally planned to be sited in Kansas. The facility was built in New Mexico after the Kansas site was determined unsafe. The WIPP facility is situated 2,000 feet below surface level and is used for storing transuranic radioactive items, which are items with atomic numbers higher than that of uranium.

The building of the URENCO uranium enrichment facility has provided an economic boom to the city of Eunice. Nuclear power provides about 11% of the world's energy. URENCO imports Canadian uranium ore to Eunice, where the ore is milled and enriched to become yellowcake, a type of uranium concentrate powder. The URENCO plant produces uranium products for approximately 20% of the United States energy mix.

In response to questioning, Ms. LaBorwit said that the Atomic Histories Exhibition is scheduled to run through February 2020, and the exhibition contains histories and features from different areas of the state.

2019 Interim Work Plan and Meeting Schedule

Ms. Casebier discussed the proposed work plan and meeting schedule for the 2019 interim. Members of the committee discussed the work plan and meeting locations. The committee decided to request one additional meeting day for the 2019 interim from the New Mexico Legislative Council. On a motion duly made and seconded, the committee approved the work plan and meeting schedule as discussed, without objection.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the committee adjourned at 2:38 p.m.