

April 7, 2023

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 24

The Honorable Javier Martinez, Speaker of the House and
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Speaker Martinez and Members of the House:

I regret to be the bad news bear, but I have decided to veto HOUSE BILL 363, as amended (“HB 363”), which would have authorized a special registration plate with the image and name of Smokey Bear. I want to start by saying that I am a proud fan of our fellow native New Mexican, Smokey Bear. As someone who grew up in a state with a high risk of wildfires, I understand the importance of his message of fire prevention and the need to spread it. I also support dedicating the fees collected for this special plate for forest fire prevention.

Unfortunately, a Senate floor amendment requiring that *all* standardized special registration plates be made with a blank space for an authorized decal logo effectively set mine and Smokey’s dreams up in smoke. The idea of standardizing special registration plates is laudable, but this approach is inefficient and unnecessary. The amendment is based on an incorrect assumption that: (1) the Taxation and Revenue Department (“TRD”) has warehouses full of special registration plates that it cannot move and must inventory at cost, and (2) transitioning to a standardized sticker-based special plate would be cheaper and easier to manufacture. Neither of these are true. TRD has no inventories of special plates because these are now made on demand. And decal stickers are much more expensive due to the materials involved and the necessity to pre-order them in large batches—ironically creating the exact “inventory” problem this amendment seeks to extinguish.

Because of these issues, and pursuant to my authority under Article IV, Section 22 of the New Mexico Constitution, I have vetoed HOUSE BILL 363, as amended, enacted by the Fifty-Sixth Legislature, First Session, 2023. Although I am the one who must bear the weight of this veto, please remember: only YOU can prevent bad amendments.

Respectfully yours,

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

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Time: _____ a.m. p.m.

Date: _____ 2023

By _____
Secretary of State

Time: _____ a.m. p.m.

Date: _____ 2023

By _____
Chief Clerk of the House