

The People Behind the Process

Building New Mexico's Budget

This is the third installation of a five-part series called The People Behind the Process – Building New Mexico's Budget. Part One can be found [here](#) and Part Two is [here](#).

There are two main committees that focus on budgetary matters, they are the House appropriations and finance committee and the Senate finance committee. Throughout the next few weeks, we will highlight members of these respective committees and the important work they do in helping create the state budget. The upcoming 30 days legislative session will be largely devoted to budgetary items along with items on the Governor's call.



Representative Nathan Small

Biography:

Representative Nathan Small is a third-generation New Mexican from a family of teachers and ranchers. Nathan represents House District 36 which includes a portion of Dona Ana County. Nathan served two terms as Las Cruces City Councilor and previously chaired the City of Las Cruces Economic Development Committee. In addition to serving as the vice chair on the House Appropriations and Finance Committee, Nathan also serves on the House Agriculture and Water Resources Committee. Legislation sponsored by Representative Small that directly benefits the agriculture industry includes HB 546 Produced Water Act (Chaptered 2019), HB 204 The Healthy Soils Act (Chaptered 2019), and HB 203 Economic Development Finance & Ag Enterprises Act (Chaptered 2019).



Education:

- Dual degrees in Philosophy and English from the College of Wooster

How long have you served on SFC/HAFC? 2019 - Current

What is your favorite part of serving on the committee? My favorite part of HAFC is serving under the strong leadership provided by Madam Chair Lundstrom. I appreciate her work ethic, her commitment to and command of detail, and shared excitement of digging deep into budget issues to generate the best outcomes. This sentiment also really extends to all my fellow committee members, committee staff, and the interested stakeholders. I appreciate being able to work on trying to fit as many priorities together as possible.

What is the most important thing you have learned while serving on the committee? The most important thing I have learned is to always listen, and to try and listen with a sense of curiosity to really understand details, and how priorities and stakeholders can all fit and work together. Another thing I have learned is that the best questions we can ask are short ones. These types of questions really work to spark more conversation and generate more detail. We want to be ready to ask those questions and to look for those kinds of questions from a variety of stakeholders.



What do you anticipate for the upcoming 30-day session? During the upcoming session, I anticipate that there will be a lot of conversation around the boom-and-bust cycle of oil and gas. We have seen revenues increase 18%, and I believe there needs to be a healthy amount of conversation to better understand where we are in the cycle as well as the depth and duration of it. Oil volume and production have increased threefold since I was first elected, and we have experienced and will continue to experience extreme volatility in the sector.

We also will need to address the challenges in the labor market as well as how we invest and prioritize infrastructure, education, economic development, and more. We are facing additional labor market challenges and we have the resources to address them, so we must work to find an effective and balanced approach.

Lastly, we really need to consider what changes we can effectively make with our additional resources. Our investments can open and leverage additional resources to get work done on the ground, I hope to see a lot of this in January, as this is the right time to be having these conversations.

Is there anything else you'd like our membership to be aware of as we enter the upcoming legislative session? I encourage the NMFLB members to reach out and connect; come to Santa Fe, call, email, or text. Stay engaged. I look forward to hearing from our state's agriculture producers and communities.