



**NEW MEXICO
FARM & LIVESTOCK BUREAU**

**WEEKLY INTERIM WRAP UP
OCTOBER 21-22, 2021**

Community Solar Update

The PRC reported that they are on schedule to have the final community solar rule developed by April 1, 2022, they are about to begin the formal rulemaking process. They also reported on their community input activities.

Update on NM Agriculture

The group (NM Chile Association, NM Association of Conservation Districts, NM Cattle Growers, NM Dairy Producers, and NM Farm and Livestock Bureau) provided a general update on the value of the ag industry, current progress on sustainability and innovation, as well as opportunities and challenges in the sector. The group requested funding support for the state meat inspection program, statewide weather station initiative, cloud seeding, and ag education.

Office of the Natural Resources Trustee

Maggie Hart Stebbins provided a presentation, the office is an independent organization housed under the NM environment department. The Governor appoints the trustee and the trustee's job is to return natural resources to their pre-contamination conditions after hazardous contaminants have been released into the environment. If they can't rehabilitate the resources, then they replace or acquire equivalent resources. The office also ensures that communities are compensated for the loss of the natural resources and the loss of use of those resources and services they provide. The statutes that govern the ONRT are federal statutes, they would like to pursue state legislation that gives them more authority. They are specifically looking at amending the trustee act to give them response authority under state law. Based on the presentation it seems that these changes will be looked at during the 60-day session although they have begun the work preparing the amendments and supporting material.

Energy Minerals and Natural Resources

Secretary Propst provided a presentation, they are requesting additional funding to expand their work. The overall budget request is just above 82 million dollars with an increase/expansion request of 32.1% over last year. Additional funding will be utilized to address climate change, statewide economic diversification with emphasis on state parks, conservation, and natural resource protection (which includes funding for 30x30 conservation goals), and lastly building department capacity.

NM Department of Game and Fish

Director Sloane provided a virtual presentation to the committee. The Director mentioned the memorial they were having for the late commissioner Soules who recently passed away and served on the game commission. Budget priorities were also reported on, the department is seeking additional funding to address its employee vacancies. The department currently has a 15% vacancy rate caused by multiple challenges like pay, treatment/perception of law enforcement officers by the public, and lack of new graduates from our state intuitions. Director Sloane also mentioned a federal piece of legislation which he feels will assist the department in managing wildlife and access additional federal funding for those efforts. The bill is called Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The Director also reported that the elk rule will be open for amendments this upcoming year.

Environment Department

Provided a presentation. Priorities for the department identified during the presentation include adopting a clean fuel standard, establishing NM as a hydrogen hub, ensuring the safety of recreational cannabis, and supporting safe drinking water in all communities.

Consideration of Legislation for Endorsement

The following bills were endorsed by the committee:

- NM Reforestation Act – Senator Woods
- Weather Station Appropriation Bill – Zamora
- Meat Inspection Appropriation Bill – Chatfield
- NMSU Ag Science Center Appropriation Bill – Woods
- Water Planning Appropriation Bill – Lujan
- Water Trust Fund Appropriation Bill - Stefanics