

SENATE BILL 193

55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2021

INTRODUCED BY

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This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

AN ACT

RELATING TO RURAL COMMUNITIES; PROVIDING FOR A RURAL EQUITY OMBUD IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION; PROVIDING POWERS AND DUTIES **SFC→**;
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION←SFC .

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. [NEW MATERIAL] RURAL EQUITY OMBUD--LOCAL

.219108.1AIC March 6, 2021 (8:11am)

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GOVERNMENT DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND
ADMINISTRATION.--

A. The local government division of the department of finance and administration shall employ at least one "rural equity ombud", whose job it is to work on issues of concern to rural and frontier communities with:

- (1) the governor's office, the legislature and all state agencies;
- (2) counties and municipalities in the state;
- (3) federal agencies, including the rural utilities service and the rural development agency of the United States department of agriculture, the United States department of the interior, the United States department of housing and urban development and other appropriate federal agencies; and
- (4) nonprofit organizations that address issues faced by rural and frontier communities or provide services to residents of those communities.

B. The rural equity ombud shall be
SIRC→~~appointed~~←SIRC SIRC→~~employed~~←SIRC solely on the basis of
education and experience SIRC→.←SIRC SIRC→~~and shall be~~←SIRC
SIRC→~~nonpartisan.~~←SIRC

C. The rural equity ombud shall:

- (1) provide technical assistance to federal, state and local governments on issues of concern for rural and

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frontier communities;

(2) provide planning assistance to the state and counties to ensure that concerns of residents of rural and frontier communities are being addressed as part of the state's or a county's planning processes in:

(a) health;

(b) human services;

(c) educational services;

(d) economic development;

(e) infrastructure planning, funding and improvements, including water and wastewater, utilities, roads and highways, broadband and other infrastructure;

(f) public safety;

(g) transportation;

(h) land use and land development;

(i) tourism;

(j) energy;

(k) natural resource management, including game and fish resources;

(l) community development block grant projects;

(m) state or local planning in conjunction with federal agencies and funding; and

(n) any other planning processes that affect rural and frontier communities;

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(3) serve as an advocate for rural and frontier communities and work to ensure that those communities' needs are met and that residents of rural and frontier communities have a voice in state and local government;

(4) take and resolve complaints from rural and frontier communities SFC→~~about laws and rules that are intentionally or unintentionally biased against rural and frontier communities~~←SFC ;

(5) provide bill analyses and provide testimony to the legislature on legislation that positively or negatively affects rural and frontier communities;

(6) make annual reports to the governor and the legislature on:

(a) activities of the ombud, including interactions with governmental agencies and the outcome of those interactions;

(b) complaints received and resolved;

(c) structural barriers to providing needed services to rural and frontier communities and recommendations for eliminating or ameliorating those barriers; and

(d) other information that may inform executive and legislative decisions affecting rural and frontier communities; and

(7) perform other duties as assigned by the

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director of the local government division of the department of finance and administration, the secretary of finance and administration, the governor or the legislature.

SFC→SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.--Ninety-five thousand dollars (\$95,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the local government division of the department of finance and administration for expenditure in fiscal year 2022 to carry out the purposes of Section 1 of this act. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2022 shall revert to the general fund.←SFC

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