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HOUSE BILL 16

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

INTRODUCED BY

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AN ACT

RELATING TO THE LEGISLATURE; CREATING THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY
COMMITTEE; ESTABLISHING MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES; REQUIRING
REPORTS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

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

**SECTION 1. TEMPORARY PROVISION--RURAL OPPORTUNITY
COMMITTEE--CREATED--TERMINATION.--**There is created a joint
interim legislative committee that shall be known as the "rural
opportunity committee". The committee shall function from the
date of its appointment until the first day of December prior
to the first session of the fifty-sixth legislature.

**SECTION 2. TEMPORARY PROVISION--MEMBERSHIP--
APPOINTMENTS.--**

A. The rural opportunity committee shall be
composed of fourteen members. Eight members of the house of

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1 representatives shall be appointed by the speaker of the house
2 of representatives, and six members of the senate shall be
3 appointed by the committees' committee of the senate or, if the
4 senate appointments are made in the interim, by the president
5 pro tempore of the senate after consultation with and agreement
6 of a majority of the members of the committees' committee.

7 B. Members shall be appointed from each house so as
8 to give:

9 (1) the two major political parties in each
10 house the same proportional representation on the committee as
11 prevails in each house; however, in no event shall either party
12 have less than one member from each house on the committee; and

13 (2) representation to the membership of each
14 of the following interim committees, to be made in consultation
15 with the appropriate chair of that committee to ensure
16 accountability:

17 (a) the legislative finance committee;

18 (b) the legislative education study

19 committee;

20 (c) the legislative health and human

21 services committee;

22 (d) the revenue stabilization and tax

23 policy committee;

24 (e) the New Mexico finance authority

25 oversight committee; and

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1 (f) the appropriate interim committees
2 or subcommittees that deal with: 1) water and natural
3 resources; 2) rural and economic development; 3) Indian
4 affairs; 4) land grants; 5) science, technology and
5 telecommunications; and 6) transportation infrastructure.

6 C. Vacancies on the committee shall be filled by
7 appointment in the same manner as the original appointments.
8 At the request of the committee chair, members may be removed
9 from the committee by the New Mexico legislative council for
10 nonattendance according to council policy. For the interim
11 occurring during the 2021 calendar year, the speaker of the
12 house of representatives shall appoint the chair of the
13 committee, and the president pro tempore of the senate shall
14 appoint the vice chair of the committee. For the interim
15 occurring during the 2022 calendar year, the president pro
16 tempore of the senate shall appoint the chair of the committee,
17 and the speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint
18 the vice chair of the committee.

19 D. No action shall be taken by the committee if a
20 majority of the total membership from either house on the
21 committee rejects such action.

22 SECTION 3. TEMPORARY PROVISION--DUTIES.--After its
23 appointment, the rural opportunity committee shall hold one
24 organizational meeting to develop a work plan and budget for
25 the ensuing interim. The work plan and budget shall be

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1 submitted to the New Mexico legislative council for approval.
2 Upon approval of the work plan and budget by the legislative
3 council, the committee shall:

4 A. review issues affecting rural areas of the
5 state;

6 B. identify barriers to economic and educational
7 opportunities in rural areas of the state and propose policies
8 to reduce or eliminate those barriers;

9 C. assess all potential funding sources and
10 opportunities for investment in infrastructure, economic
11 development, education and health care in rural areas of the
12 state;

13 D. develop a long-term plan to address rural needs,
14 including the development of a rural relief legislative
15 proposal that leverages bonding capacity, capital outlay
16 funding and general fund appropriations, to provide for rural
17 economic development;

18 E. review current tax policy, including credits,
19 rebates and deductions, to ensure equity between urban and
20 rural communities;

21 F. coordinate with the office of the governor to
22 develop proposals;

23 G. coordinate and meet concurrently, whenever
24 practicable, with other legislative interim committees that
25 address similar issues;

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