

**MINUTES
of the
THIRD MEETING
of the
ECONOMIC AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

**August 3-4, 2026
145 Commons Area
Instructional Technology Center
Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell
23 West Mathis Street
Roswell**

The third meeting of the Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee was called to order by Representative Doreen Gallegos, chair, on August 3, 2026 at 9:15 a.m. at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)-Roswell in Roswell.

Present

Rep. Doreen Y. Gallegos, Chair
Sen. Angel M. Charley, Vice Chair
Sen. Jay C. Block
Sen. Pat Boone
Sen. Crystal Brantley
Rep. Martha Garcia
Sen. Antonio Maestas
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero

Absent

Rep. Janelle Anyanonu
Rep. Gail Armstrong
Rep. Nicole Chavez
Rep. Joshua N. Hernandez
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Rep. Marian Matthews
Sen. Micaelita Debbie O'Malley
Sen. Linda Serrato
Rep. Sarah Silva
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

Advisory Members

Sen. Natalie Figueroa
Rep. Jenifer Jones (8/3)
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Mark B. Murphy
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Sen. William E. Sharer

Sen. Heather Berghmans
Rep. Catherine J. Cullen
Rep. Meredith A. Dixon
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Rep. Anita Gonzales
Sen. Steve D. Lanier
Rep. Raymundo Lara
Rep. Charlotte Little
Rep. Stefani Lord
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Rep. Jimmy G. Mason
Rep. Rod Montoya
Sen. Nicole Tobiassen
Sen. James G. Townsend

Guest Legislator

Rep. Angelita Mejia

(Attendance dates are noted for those members not present for the entire meeting.)

Staff

Lisa Rivera Morrison, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)

Erin Bond, Researcher, LCS

Marisa Garcia-Hart, Records Officer, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

References to Webcast

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at www.nmlegis.gov, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Monday, August 3**Welcome and Introductions (9:15 a.m.)**

Representative Gallegos welcomed everyone to the meeting, and members introduced themselves.

Welcome, Updates and Highlights on Projects and Needs (9:22 a.m.)

Shawn Powell, Ph.D., president, ENMU-Roswell, discussed the university's programs and services provided to the City of Roswell and the surrounding communities, noting that 2,325 individuals have received vocational training since Government Results and Opportunity funding was implemented two years ago. Mike Espiritu, chief executive officer, Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corporation (RCCEDC), discussed the RCCEDC's work in recruiting and supporting businesses, including bringing the National Championship Air Races to Roswell and developing the Project Roswell Information Park. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=1>.

Updates on the Cattle and Beef Processing Industries (10:26 a.m.)

Tom Paterson, president, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, reviewed the association's legislative priorities, with the aim of keeping food producers on the land. Mr. Paterson expressed a desire that producers be brought into policy conversations before bills are drafted. Nayely Madrid, office manager, USA Beef Packing, said that USA Beef Packing provides local, United States Department of Agriculture-inspected meat processing for New Mexico producers, which allows producers to participate in the New Mexico Grown program, and reviewed the products, services and community impact of USA Beef Packing. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=2>.

Promoting and Preserving Local Cheesemaking (11:52 a.m.)

Lissa Knudsen, board chair, New Mexico Cheese Guild, discussed ways the legislature could support small-scale dairies, cheesemakers and ruminant producers, including naming a state microbe to encourage education on and interest in New Mexico's terroir. Garrett Wade, director of business development, Galloping Goat Grazing, spoke on how goats and sheep can be used not just for milk production but also for prescribed grazing to reduce wildfire risks. Zach Withers, owner and operator, Polk's Folly Farm, highlighted the need for supporting locally produced meat and produce. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=3>.

Update on Oil and Gas Development, Orphan Well Plugging and Energy Conservation in New Mexico (12:43 p.m.)

Erin Taylor, acting secretary, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), discussed the implementation and use of grid modernization and community energy efficiency development grant programs. Ben Shelton, deputy secretary and acting general counsel, EMNRD, reviewed the department's work in plugging inactive wells that have no operators of record, commonly known as orphan wells, and noted that the Oil Conservation Division of the EMNRD plugged 114 wells in fiscal year 2026. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=4>.

Regulatory Reform, Oil and Gas Tax Structure, How Energy Sources Work Together and Workforce Training (1:52 p.m.)

Andrea Felix, vice president of regulatory affairs, New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, discussed the impact of oil and gas on New Mexico's economy, noting that in fiscal year 2025, the industry's taxes generated \$7.5 billion for the General Fund and \$5.6 billion in non-general fund revenue. Ms. Felix proposed possible changes to New Mexico's regulatory procedure for

the oil and gas industry, including establishing a uniform process for finalizing and publishing rules. Jennifer Raney, deputy director, Petroleum Recovery Research Center (PRRC), New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, stated that the PRRC is tasked with conducting research into the recovery of petroleum and other energy sources. She reviewed recent and active research projects, including research into produced water purification and recycling. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=5>.

Alternative Energy Update (3:40 p.m.)

Nick Fuhr, senior director of development, NextEra Energy Transmission, stated that NextEra Energy Transmission is one of the largest independent electric transmission companies in the United States and highlighted its Crossroads-Hobbs-Roadrunner transmission line. Logan Stephens, vice president and head of development, XGS Energy, discussed the development of the geothermal energy industry in New Mexico and how XGS's next generation geothermal technology could use New Mexico's hot rocks to generate electricity. Jackson Grimes, director of global engagement, InnerSpace Action, proposed three statutory changes that the legislature could make to help accelerate the geothermal energy industry: establish a unified definition of geothermal resource, allow the sale of geothermal heat and not solely geothermal power and convert the geothermal tax credit to an investment credit. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=6>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 4:56 p.m.

Tuesday, August 4

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:08 a.m.

Welcome and Update on Flooding Issues and the Local Economy for Roswell (9:09 a.m.)

Tim Jennings, mayor, City of Roswell, discussed the importance of supporting economic development in Roswell and other non-metropolitan communities in New Mexico. He noted that the damage done by recent flooding has made it difficult for impacted individuals and buildings to purchase insurance.

Tour of the Automotive and Welding Technology Center and the Health Science Center, ENMU-Roswell (9:43 a.m.)

Committee members and committee staff toured ENMU-Roswell's Automotive and Welding Technology Center and Health Science Center, which have benefited from Government Results and Opportunity funding.

Update on Rural Roads, Bridges and Infrastructure (10:54 a.m.)

David Quintana, acting secretary, Department of Transportation, provided a review of transportation infrastructure projects in rural portions of the transportation districts, as well as funding opportunities available for infrastructure development. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=8>.

Renewable Energy (11:32 a.m.)

Varner Seaman, director of government affairs, Pattern Energy, and Tina Archuleta, public engagement manager, Pattern Energy, provided an overview of Pattern Energy's portfolio, including Western Spirit Wind and SunZia Wind and Transmission, and reviewed a sample decommissioning framework for wind turbines. They highlighted a new wind project, Palomas Wind, in San Miguel and Torrance counties. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=9>.

Modern Home Construction with Modular Solutions (12:19 p.m.)

Chance Mitchell, president, Fortified Structures, discussed how modular homes can be more affordable for developers and homeowners to build than traditional homes and reviewed Fortified Structures' building process. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=8/3/2026&ItemNumber=10>.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.