

**MINUTES
of the
THIRD MEETING
of the
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**August 10-11, 2026
Joseph A. Fidel Center, Ballrooms B and C
New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
1 Olive Lane
Socorro**

The third meeting of the Science, Technology and Telecommunications Committee was called to order by Senator Heather Berghmans, chair, on Monday, August 10, 2026, at 10:14 a.m. in the Joseph A. Fidel Center at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech) in Socorro.

Present

Sen. Heather Berghmans, Chair
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana, Vice Chair
Rep. Joy Garratt
Rep. Anita Gonzales
Rep. Joshua N. Hernandez
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Alan T. Martinez (8/10)
Sen. Michael Padilla (8/10)
Sen. Harold Pope
Sen. William P. Soules
Sen. Anthony L. Thornton (8/11)
Sen. Nicole Tobiassen

Absent

Advisory Members

Sen. Jay C. Block
Rep. Christine Chandler (8/10)
Sen. Linda M. Trujillo

Rep. Janelle Anyanonu
Rep. Gail Armstrong
Rep. Meredith A. Dixon
Rep. Yanira Gurrola
Rep. Charlotte Little
Sen. Larry R. Scott
Rep. Linda Serrato
Rep. Sarah Silva
Sen. James G. Townsend

Guest Legislators

Rep. Micaela Lara Cadena (8/11)
Rep. Rebecca Dow (8/11)
Sen. Linda M. López (8/11)
Rep. Angelica Rubio (8/11)

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

Staff

Mark Edwards, Bill Drafter, Legislative Council Service (LCS)

Joanne Montague, Senior Legislative Librarian, LCS

William Mason, Staff, 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 under the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Monday, August 10**Welcome and Introductions (10:15 a.m.)**

Senator Berghmans welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members introduced themselves.

Welcome to Socorro (10:17 a.m.)

Ravi Bhasker, mayor, City of Socorro, welcomed the committee.

NM Tech Status Update (10:22 a.m.)

Michael Jackson, Ph.D., president, NM Tech, gave a presentation on NM Tech and its contributions to the state's economy and educational system. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=8/10/2026&ItemNumber=2>.

Approval of Minutes (11:35 a.m.)

On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the June 23-24, 2026 meeting were approved without changes.

Spaceport America Status Update (11:35 a.m.)

Scott McLaughlin, executive director, Spaceport Authority, gave an update on the status and operations of Spaceport America and its current five-year plan for development. The presentation materials can be found here:

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

Institute for Complex Additive Systems Analysis (ICASA): Advancing Technology for the Public Good — State of New Mexico Projects (1:36 p.m.)

Michael Smith, Ph.D., director, ICASA, NM Tech; Taylor Dotson, Ph.D., associate professor and senior researcher, ICASA, NM Tech; Mary Pinnell-Baker, data storytelling and visualisation specialist and research program manager, ICASA, NM Tech; and Jeriah McKenna, research program manager, ICASA, NM Tech, discussed ICASA's purpose and gave an overview of its ongoing work in partnership with the state. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=8/10/2026&ItemNumber=4>.

NM Tech Research Roadmap (2:44 p.m.)

Lique Coolen, Ph.D., vice president of research, NM Tech, presented on the scope and variety of research programs at the university. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=8/10/2026&ItemNumber=5>.

Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources: Aquifer Mapping, Water Data Initiative and Geothermal Update (3:21 p.m.)

Mike Timmons, director and state geologist, Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, NM Tech; Stacy Timmons, associate director, Hydrogeology Programs, Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, NM Tech; and Shari Kelley, lead research scientist, Geothermal Program, Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, NM Tech, discussed the bureau's programs for aquifer and geothermal mapping and water data collection. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=8/10/2026&ItemNumber=6>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 4:56 p.m.

Tuesday, August 11

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:11 a.m.

Large Load Demand: Supporting Economic Growth While Maintaining Fair Electric Rates (9:11 a.m.)

Agata Malek, division director, Office of Technical and Policy Advisors, Public Regulation Commission (PRC), gave a presentation on large electric load users from the perspective of the PRC. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=8/10/2026&ItemNumber=7>.

Data Centers: Air Quality and Water Use Consideration (10:09 a.m.)

David Baake, Baake Law, and Blake Gardiner, program manager, Clean Energy, National Association of Counties, presented on the issues of air quality and water consumption arising from large-scale data centers. The presentation materials can be found here:

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

Collaborative Water Filtration Development: NM Tech-Navajo Technical University-Navajo Nation-Process Equipment and Service Company (PESCO) (11:52 a.m.)

Robert Balch, director, Petroleum Recovery Research Center, NM Tech; John Byrom, chief commercial officer, PESCO; Jianjia Yu, Ph.D., research scientist and assistant professor, NM Tech; and Steve Grey, owner and president, Grey LLC, and former chair, Four Corners Economic Development, discussed a project for research, development and deployment of hollow fiber membrane water treatment systems on the Navajo Nation. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=8/10/2026&ItemNumber=9>.

Conceptual Framework for a Data Center Moratorium (1:26 p.m.)

Representative Cadena and Representative Rubio discussed aspects of a possible state moratorium on the construction of data centers. The presentation materials can be found here:

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

ICASA: Playas Research and Training Center and National Security Projects (2:40 p.m.)

Dr. Smith and Dr. Coolen gave a presentation on ICASA's research and development projects in fields relating to national security, including work undertaken at the Playas Research and Training Center. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=8/10/2026&ItemNumber=11>.

Cybersecurity, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence — NM Tech (3:13 p.m.)

Jun Zheng, Ph.D., chair, Computer Science and Engineering Department, NM Tech; Nathan Fisk, Ph.D., director, Cybersecurity Center of Excellence, NM Tech; John Naliboff, Ph.D., associate professor, Computational Geophysics, NM Tech; and Dr. Coolen discussed NM Tech's programs and research at the intersection of cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=8/10/2026&ItemNumber=11>.

Public Comment (4:39 p.m.)

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.