

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

**July 7, 2025  
Inn of the Mountain Gods  
287 Carrizo Canyon Road  
Mescalero**

**July 8, 2025  
SunZia Project  
523 Main Street  
Corona**

The second meeting of the Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee was called to order by Senator Angel M. Charley, chair, at 9:36 a.m. on July 7, 2025 at the Inn of the Mountain Gods in Mescalero.

**Present**

Sen. Angel M. Charley, Chair  
Rep. Doreen Y. Gallegos, Vice Chair (7/7)  
Rep. Gail Armstrong (7/7)  
Sen. Pat Boone  
Rep. Nicole Chavez (7/7)  
Rep. Joshua N. Hernandez  
Sen. Micaelita Debbie O'Malley (7/7)  
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto (7/7)  
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero  
Rep. Linda Serrato  
Rep. Martin R. Zamora (7/7)

**Advisory Members**

Sen. Heather Berghmans (7/8)  
Rep. Catherine J. Cullen  
Rep. Jenifer Jones (7/7)  
Sen. Steve D. Lanier  
Rep. Charlotte Little  
Rep. Tara L. Lujan (7/7)  
Sen. William E. Sharer  
Sen. Nicole Tobiassen (7/7)

**Absent**

Rep. Janelle Anyanonu  
Sen. Jay C. Block  
Sen. Crystal Brantley  
Rep. Martha Garcia  
Sen. Antonio Maestas  
Rep. Alan T. Martinez  
Rep. Marian Matthews  
Rep. Sarah Silva  
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

**Absent**

Rep. Meredith A. Dixon  
Sen. Natalie Figueroa  
Sen. David M. Gallegos  
Rep. Anita Gonzales  
Rep. Raymundo Lara  
Rep. Stefani Lord  
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom  
Rep. Jimmy G. Mason  
Rep. Rod Montoya  
Rep. Mark B. Murphy  
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez  
Sen. James G. Townsend

## **Guest Legislator**

Rep. Harlan Vincent (7/7)

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

## **Staff**

Erin Bond, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)

Mark Edwards, Bill Drafter, LCS

Sheila Keleher, Researcher, LCS

## **Guests**

The guest list is in the meeting file.

## **Handouts**

Copies of all handouts and 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](http://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, July 7 — Mescalero**

### **Welcome, the Economy of the Mescalero Apache Tribe and New Mexico (9:36 a.m.)**

Senator Charley asked members of the committee and staff to introduce themselves. Thora Walsh Padilla, president, Mescalero Apache Tribe, welcomed the committee. President Walsh Padilla and Duane Duffy, vice president, Mescalero Apache Tribe, presented an overview of major economic projects and programs currently administered by the Mescalero Apache Tribe and plans for upcoming projects and programs. Isaac Romero, deputy secretary, Economic Development Department (EDD), presented an overview of some existing economic development programs run by the EDD. He also gave an overview of the new Technology and Innovation Division of the department. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=7/7/2025&ItemNumber=1>.

### **A Community Response to a Natural Disaster (11:33 a.m.)**

President Walsh Padilla; Lynn D. Crawford, mayor, Village of Ruidoso; and Rick Baugh, general manager, Ruidoso Downs Race Track, gave a presentation regarding the recent fires and post-fire flood events in their communities and how the Mescalero Apache Tribe and the Village of Ruidoso have responded to these natural disasters. They explored the potential ongoing risks

to those communities from future fire and flood events. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=7/7/2025&ItemNumber=2>.

**Medical Memorandum of Understanding between Lincoln County and the Mescalero Apache Tribe (1:34 p.m.)**

President Walsh Padilla gave an overview of the availability of medical services in the Mescalero-Lincoln County region. She also explained efforts by the Mescalero Apache Tribe to work with local governments within the region to increase the availability of non-emergency health services, such as routine health checkups.

**Economic Pathways Through Forest Restoration and Water Management (1:54 p.m.)**

Elizabeth K. Anderson, state engineer, Office of the State Engineer; Laura McCarthy, state forester, Forestry Division, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD); William Foster, forest markets coordinator, Forestry Division, EMNRD; Deputy Secretary Romero; and Dennis Romero, chief, Construction Programs Bureau, Water Protection Division, Department of Environment, discussed the potential benefits for rural economic stability of creating healthy and water-producing forests and natural landscapes. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=7/7/2025&ItemNumber=4>.

**Approval of Minutes (3:49 p.m.)**

Upon a motion duly made and without objection, the committee approved the minutes of the June 4, 2025 meeting.

**Energy Development (3:49 p.m.)**

Rebecca Puck Stair, director, Energy Conservation and Management Division, EMNRD, provided information regarding energy development programs offered by the division, particularly for renewable energy facilities and rural and tribal communities. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=7/7/2025&ItemNumber=5>.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Recess**

The meeting recessed at 4:38 p.m.

**Tuesday, July 8 — Corona**

**Tour of the SunZia Project (10:00 a.m.)**

Committee members and staff took a tour of the SunZia Wind and Transmission project.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:27 p.m.