

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

**October 23-24, 2025
Pan American Center, Barbara Hubbard Room
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces**

The fifth meeting of the Science, Technology and Telecommunications Committee was called to order by Representative Debra M. Sariñana, chair, on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 9:06 a.m. at New Mexico State University (NMSU) in Las Cruces.

Present

Rep. Debra M. Sariñana, Chair
Sen. Heather Berghmans, Vice Chair
Rep. Joy Garratt
Rep. Anita Gonzales
Rep. Tara L. Lujan (10/24)
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Sen. Michael Padilla (10/23)
Sen. William P. Soules

Advisory Members

Sen. Jay C. Block (10/23)
Sen. Linda M. Trujillo

Absent

Rep. Joshua N. Hernandez
Sen. Harold Pope
Sen. Anthony L. Thornton
Sen. Nicole Tobiassen

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

Guest Legislator

Rep. Micaela Lara Cadena (10/23)

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

Staff

Mark Edwards, Bill Drafter, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
William Mason, Staff, LCS
Joanne Montague, Senior Legislative Librarian, 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.

Thursday, October 23

Welcome and Introductions (9:06 a.m.)

Representative Sariñana welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members and staff introduced themselves.

NMSU Welcome and Overview (9:16 a.m.)

Valerio Ferme, president, NMSU, welcomed the committee and gave an update on NMSU.

Approval of Minutes (9:45 a.m.)

On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the August 25-26, 2025 and September 22-23, 2025 meetings were approved without changes.

Office of Cybersecurity: Fiscal Year 2027 Legislative and Budget Priorities (9:52 a.m.)

Raja Sambandam, state chief information security officer, Cybersecurity Office, gave a presentation on the office's budget needs for fiscal year 2027. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=2>.

Executive Session (9:53 a.m.)

On a motion duly made and seconded, the committee entered a closed executive session regarding cybersecurity.

Data Center Impacts on New Mexico: Policy Solutions for Water and Energy (11:37 a.m.)

Deborah Kapiloff, policy analyst, Western Resource Advocates, presented on the water and energy requirements of large data centers and discussed proposed legislation regulating data centers in New Mexico and other states. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=3>.

Community Safety and Data Privacy: Current Impacts and Policy Solutions (1:24 p.m.)

Lena Weber, director, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Mexico, discussed the effects of online data collection on community safety and presented the ACLU's recommendations for laws protecting data privacy. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=4>.

Development of New Cash Crops for New Mexico: Prospective Production Areas and Markets (2:19 p.m.)

Jay Lillywhite, Ph.D., associate dean and director, Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, NMSU, and Omar Holguin, Ph.D., director, Center of Excellence in Sustainable Food and Agricultural Systems, NMSU, discussed NMSU's agricultural research and education programs. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=5>.

Institute for Applied Practice in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning: Leveraging AI for Agricultural Production and Medical Practice and Other Disciplines (2:51 p.m.)

Lara Prihodko, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Animal and Range Sciences, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, NMSU; Huiping Cao, professor, Department of Computer Science, NMSU; and Mike Hout, Ph.D., associate dean for research, College of Health, Education and Social Transformation, NMSU, discussed NMSU's new degree program in AI and plans for future expansion. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=6>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 3:22 p.m.

Tour of the Leyendecker Plant Science Research Center (3:23 p.m.)

Members of the committee and staff toured NMSU's Leyendecker Plant Science Research Center.

Friday, October 24

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:01 a.m.

Types of Regulatory Guardrails to Ensure that AI Technology Is a Net Benefit to Consumers and the General Public (9:01 a.m.)

Matt Scherer, senior policy counsel and project lead, Workers' Rights and Technology, Center for Democracy and Technology, and Grace Gedye, policy analyst on AI, *Consumer Reports*, discussed possible regulations governing AI to provide consumer and individual protections. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=7>.

Ensuring that AI Technology Is a Net Benefit to Consumers and the General Public Without Stifling Industry Innovation (10:25 a.m.)

Renzo Soto, executive director, Texas and the South, TechNet; Willy Chanes Martinez, associate attorney, Mariner Strategies; and Kyle Shannon, founder and chief executive officer, AI Salon, discussed the landscape of actual and proposed legislation regulating AI at the state and federal levels. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=8>.

Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment: Overview of Federal Financing Programs (12:48 p.m.)

Tom Hucker, senior adviser, Loan Programs Office, United States Department of Energy, presented on the department's Loan Programs Office and the office's financing of energy technology and infrastructure projects. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=9>.

Leveraging the Physical Science Laboratory (PSL) for Recruitment and Development of New Mexico Aerospace Industries (1:16 p.m.)

Patricia Sullivan, Ph.D., interim director, PSL, and associate dean for outreach and recruitment, College of Engineering, NMSU, discussed the PSL's contributions to aerospace

research and partnerships with other research bodies in the public and private sectors. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=10>.

Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) Status Update (2:02 p.m.)

Jeff Lopez, director, OBAE, and Aquiles Trujillo, deputy director, OBAE, presented on the current state of broadband access across New Mexico and discussed planned projects to improve that access. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=11>.

Introducing the New Mexico Nuclear Alliance (2:33 p.m.)

Scott Lopez, chief executive officer and president, New Mexico Nuclear Alliance; Alex Doniach, head of communications, Pacific Fusion; and Nikki Sizemore, government affairs manager, Kairos Power, presented on ongoing efforts to develop nuclear fission and fusion infrastructure in New Mexico. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=10/23/2025&ItemNumber=12>.

Public Comment (3:56 p.m.)

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

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.