

**MINUTES
of the
FOURTH MEETING
of the
LAND GRANT COMMITTEE**

**September 8-9, 2025
4 Community Center Road
Manzano Land Grant-Merced
Torreon**

The fourth meeting of the Land Grant Committee was called to order by Representative Linda Serrato, chair, on September 8, 2025 at 9:36 a.m. at the Manzano Land Grant-Merced Community Center in Torreon.

Present

Rep. Linda Serrato, Chair
Sen. Leo Jaramillo, Vice Chair
Sen. David M. Gallegos (9/8)
Rep. Miguel P. García
Rep. Stefani Lord (9/8)
Rep. Matthew McQueen (9/8)
Rep. Angelita Mejia
Sen. Anthony L. Thornton
Rep. E. Diane Torres-Velásquez (9/8)

Absent

Sen. Angel M. Charley
Rep. Susan K. Herrera
Sen. Antonio Maestas
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

Advisory Members

Sen. Linda M. López (9/8)
Sen. Micaelita Debbie O'Malley (9/8)
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez (9/8)

Rep. Catherine J. Cullen
Rep. Anita Gonzales
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Jimmy G. Mason
Rep. Rod Montoya

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

Staff

Ian Keller, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Mark Edwards, Bill Drafter, LCS
Nicole Waguespack, Researcher, LCS

Minutes Approval

The minutes for this meeting have not been approved by the committee.

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, September 8

Welcome and Introductions (9:36 a.m.)

Representative Serrato welcomed everyone, and members of the committee introduced themselves.

Welcome to the Manzano Land Grant-Merced and Update (9:46 a.m.)

Lenora Romero, president, Manzano Land Grant-Merced; Jacob Quintana, treasurer, Manzano Land Grant-Merced; and Jason Quintana, former president, Manzano Land Grant-Merced, reviewed ongoing efforts to maintain the land grant-merced's acequias and promote community awareness and involvement in the land grant-merced. Regarding Manzano Lake, the presenters discussed the challenges of keeping the lake stocked with trout and the removal of trash.

Motion to Draft Letter (10:17 a.m.)

A motion to draft a letter to the Department of Game and Fish (DGF) to support the stocking of Lake Manzano was proposed by Representative García. Senator Sanchez suggested that the letter also include the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD). On a motion made by Representative Serrato and seconded by Representative Lord, the committee voted to have a letter of support drafted to the DGF and the EMNRD to help facilitate fish restocking and maintenance at Lake Manzano.

Approval of Minutes (10:41 a.m.)

Upon a motion made by Senator Jaramillo and seconded by Senator Sanchez, the committee approved the minutes of the August 14-15, 2025 meeting.

New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) (10:42 a.m.)

Donnie Quintana, project oversight manager, NMFA, and Ron Cruz, managing director of lending, NMFA, provided an overview of lending options for land grants-mercedes through NMFA funds. The advantages of the Public Project Revolving Fund, such as not having origination fees and having funds for disadvantaged communities, were highlighted. The presenters expressed the willingness of the NMFA to provide administrative assistance to land grants-mercedes and help with facilitating land grants-mercedes' financial requests and audit requirements.

Update from the Chilili Land Grant-Merced (11:12 a.m.)

Erwin Lesperance, vice president, Board of Trustees, Chilili Land Grant-Merced, provided an overview of the land grant-merced's community growth, highlighting new housing development projects, including multiple new lots available to provide housing opportunities for current and future residents. Emphasizing that the community is small but growing, Mr. Lesperance noted that the Chilili Land Grant-Merced is dedicated to keeping heirs in the community and fostering connection with the land. Funding for additional land purchases, infrastructure concerns and the need to maintain youth involvement were all noted as ongoing issues.

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) (12:47 p.m.)

Jason Quintana, rural and frontier equity ombud, DFA, provided an overview of the training and support options available to land grants-mercedes through the DFA's Infrastructure Planning and Development Division. He discussed changes to policies and procedures resulting from the passage of House Bill 493 (2025), specifically noting changes to audit requirements. The rural and frontier equity ombud was also highlighted as a resource for land grant-merced assistance. He expressed the need for additional employees to support the ombuds, provide grant writing services and assist with infrastructure design and engineering and the need for more vehicles to support existing employees.

Update from San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant-Merced (1:25 p.m.)

Kendra Lucero-Matteucci, president, San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant-Merced, provided a brief history of the land grant-merced and reviewed recent property tax litigation involving Sandoval County. She discussed ongoing efforts with the Forestry Division of the EMNRD to help maintain forests in land grants-mercedes, noting that plans are being made to ensure that removed wood will be utilized by the community. Current projects include seeking greater water access and updating current bylaws.

Update from the Town of Tome Land Grant-Merced (1:55 p.m.)

Andrea Padilla, president, Town of Tome Land Grant-Merced, provided a brief history of Tome, emphasizing the importance of the church and the loss of lands held by the land grant-merced through time. She expressed the community's excitement concerning recent land and property acquisitions that will provide rental income and housing and discussed plans for future acquisitions. Current community projects, such as firewood collection, farmers market participation and improvements to the historic baseball field, were highlighted. Concerns were expressed regarding the need for infrastructure funds; the lack of housing, particularly for young residents; zoning issues related to housing; nuisance all-terrain vehicle use; and the need for law enforcement assistance. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=9/8/2025&ItemNumber=6>.

Update from the Santa Cruz de la Canada Land Grant-Merced (2:32 p.m.)

Camilla Trujillo, treasurer, Santa Cruz de la Canada Land Grant-Merced, provided a brief overview of the Santa Cruz de la Canada Land Grant-Merced, including its geography, history and population, emphasizing the community's long-rooted traditions in family and art. She discussed ongoing projects and needs, including efforts to maintain awareness of the history and culture of the land grant-merced, increase land holdings, support local farmers and promote local ranchers and the 4-H program.

United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (3:01 p.m.)

Tokey Boswell, deputy state director, Resources, Planning and Lands, New Mexico State Office, BLM, discussed the overarching mission of the BLM and its presence in New Mexico. He provided a general overview of how the BLM manages lands and its resource management plans and land disposal procedures and how they relate to land grants-mercedes. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=9/8/2025&ItemNumber=8>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 3:45 p.m.

Tuesday, September 9**Tour of the Manzano Land Grant-Merced (9:00 a.m.)**

Members of the committee and staff toured the Manzano Land Grant-Merced.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.