

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

**July 14-15, 2025
New Mexico Highlands University
Student Union Ballroom
800 National Avenue
Las Vegas**

The second meeting of the Land Grant Committee was called to order by Representative Linda Serrato, chair, on July 14, 2025 at 10:16 a.m. in the Student Union Ballroom at New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) in Las Vegas.

Present

Rep. Linda Serrato, Chair
Sen. Leo Jaramillo, Vice Chair
Rep. Miguel P. García
Rep. Stefani Lord (7/14)
Sen. Antonio Maestas (7/14)
Rep. Matthew McQueen (7/15)
Rep. Angelita Mejia
Sen. Elizaberth "Liz" Stefanics (7/14)
Sen. Anthony L. Thornton
Rep. E. Diane Torres-Velásquez

Absent

Sen. Angel M. Charley
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Rep. Susan K. Herrera

Advisory Members

Rep. Anita Gonzales
Sen. Linda M. López (7/14)

Rep. Catherine J. Cullen
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Jimmy G. Mason
Rep. Rod Montoya
Sen. Micaelita Debbie O'Malley
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez

(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
Lisa Morrison, Staff Attorney, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Copies of handouts are in the meeting file and are 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, July 14

Welcome and Introductions (10:16 a.m.)

Representative Serrato welcomed everyone and asked committee members and staff to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes (10:28 a.m.)

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the May 30, 2025 meeting were approved without changes.

Welcome and NMHU Update (10:29 a.m.)

Dann Brown, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs, NMHU, welcomed the committee and provided a status update regarding the university and its programs.

Statutory Overview of Land Grants-Mercedes (10:49 a.m.)

Mr. Edwards presented an outline of how laws governing land grant-merced communities are set out in New Mexico statutes and interim committee documents. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=7/14/2025&ItemNumber=2>.

Updates from the Lower Gallinas Land Grant-Merced (11:05 a.m.)

Antonio "Tony" Benavidez, president, Lower Gallinas Land Grant-Merced, presented a status update regarding the land grant-merced.

Updates from the San Miguel del Bado Land Grant-Merced (11:43 a.m.)

Clarsse Romero, president, San Miguel del Bado Land Grant-Merced, and Louis Gallegos, secretary, San Miguel del Bado Land Grant-Merced, presented an update regarding the land grant-merced. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=7/14/2025&ItemNumber=4>.

Status Updates from the Land Grant Council and Land Grant-Merced Institute (1:07 p.m.)

Arturo Archuleta, program manager, Land Grant Council and Land Grant-Merced Institute, University of New Mexico (UNM), provided a status update on the services and programs provided by the Land Grant Council and the Land Grant-Merced Institute at UNM. He requested that the committee send a letter to the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) asking that the council and the institute be invited to present their budget requests to the LFC. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=7/14/2025&ItemNumber=5>.

Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty Division of the State Department of Justice (2:00 p.m.)

Enrique Romero, assistant attorney general and director, Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty Division, State Department of Justice, gave an update on the activities of the division. He said that the division had held meetings with the seven land grants that were affected by the 1897 United States Supreme Court decision in *United States v. Sandoval* regarding the ownership of the common lands of the land grants. He said that pursuant to those meetings, the State Department of Justice would only be pursuing further investigations into the case on behalf of five of the grants. He suggested that in the future, instead of referring to the affected grants as the "Sandoval Seven", they should be referred to as the "Sandoval Five".

Technical Assistance for Acequias (2:51 p.m.)

Paula Garcia, executive director, New Mexico Acequia Association, and Jonathan Martinez, chief, Acequia Bureau, Interstate Stream Commission, presented on various types of assistance provided to acequias by the association and the state. Pamela Garcia, director, Constituent Services, Office of United States Senator Ben Ray Luján, and Manuel Luna, coordinator, Small Local Public Body Assistance Program, Office of the State Auditor, presented on various types of federal assistance and the services provided to acequias. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=7/14/2025&ItemNumber=7>.

Community Governance Attorney Program (4:03 p.m.)

Adrian Oglesby, director, Utton Transboundary Resources Center, UNM, and Nicolas Estrada, third-year law student and student attorney, Community Governance Attorney Program, UNM, presented on the status of the Community Governance Attorney Program. Mr. Oglesby thanked the legislature for amending the authorizing statute for the program in a way that allows for a greater number of entities to be the employers for community governance attorneys but noted that current funding levels will need to be doubled if the program is to reach the level anticipated in statute of two new attorneys joining the program each year. He said the current level only allows for one new attorney each year and indicated that that level may be in jeopardy due to inflation if funding does not increase.

Public Comment (4:32 p.m.)

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

Recess

The meeting recessed at 4:38 p.m.

Tuesday, July 15**Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 10:05 a.m.

Post-Fire Recovery at Land Grants and Acequias (10:05 a.m.)

Eddie Quintana, president, Los Vigiles Land Grant-Merced; Juan Sanchez, president, Chilili Land Grant-Merced; Paula Garcia; Jeremy Klass, Ph.D., chief, Recovery and Mitigation Bureau, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department; and Gerald Romero, manager, Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District, presented on progress being made by land grants and acequias to recover from fires in northern and central New Mexico. They also talked about the process for applying for federal and state aid and lessons learned in the aftermath of the Dog Head fire in Cibola National Forest and the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon fire in the Santa Fe National Forest. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=7/14/2025&ItemNumber=9>.

Tour of Los Vigiles Land Grant-Merced (12:25 p.m.)

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

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.