

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

**September 22-23, 2025
Mesalands Community College, Building A
911 South Tenth Street
Tucumcari**

The fourth meeting of the Science, Technology and Telecommunications Committee was called to order by Representative Debra M. Sariñana, chair, on Monday, September 22, 2025, at 10:06 a.m. in Building A of Mesalands Community College (MCC) in Tucumcari.

Present

Rep. Debra M. Sariñana, Chair
Rep. Joy Garratt
Rep. Anita Gonzales (9/22)
Rep. Joshua N. Hernandez
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Sen. Michael Padilla (9/23)
Sen. Harold Pope (9/22)
Sen. Anthony L. Thornton

Absent

Sen. Heather Berghmans, Vice Chair
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Sen. William P. Soules
Sen. Nicole Tobiassen

Advisory Members

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

Guest Legislator

Rep. Martin R. Zamora (9/22)

(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.

Monday, September 22

Welcome and Introductions (10:06 a.m.)

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

MCC Welcome and Overview of Programs (10:09 a.m.)

Allen Moss, Ed.D, president, MCC; Nathaniel Alexander, wind instructor, North American Wind Research and Training Center (NAWRTC), MCC; Terrill Stowe, wind instructor, NAWRTC, MCC; Shannon Fries, director, Nursing and Education, MCC; and Axel Hungerbuehler, Ph.D., professor, Paleontology and Physical Sciences, and Dinosaur Museum curator, MCC, welcomed the committee and gave an overview of MCC and its programs. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=1>.

Department of Information Technology (DoIT) Status Update (12:20 p.m.)

Manny Barreras, secretary, DoIT; Jason Habedank, deputy secretary, DoIT; and Raja Sambandam, state chief information security officer, Cybersecurity Office, DoIT, discussed the status and operations of the department in fiscal year 2025. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=2>.

The Western Transmission Consortium (1:04 p.m.)

Ray Gifford, managing partner, Denver Office, Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP, and Matthew Larson, partner, Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP, gave a presentation on the Western

Transmission Consortium's efforts to promote integration of regional power grids across the desert Southwest. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=3>.

New Mexico's Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (NM EPSCoR) Update (2:17 p.m.)

Ganesh "Gunny" Balakrishnan, Ph.D., director, NM EPSCoR, and principal investigator, New Mexico Sustainable, Modular, Adaptive, Resilient and Transactive Grid Center; and Selena Connealy, Ph.D., associate director, NM EPSCoR, discussed NM EPSCoR's advocacy of research in New Mexico and efforts to bring federal investment to research at the state's two- and four-year higher education institutions. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=4>.

Spaceport America Update (3:01 p.m.)

Scott McLaughlin, executive director, Spaceport Authority, gave a statement on Spaceport America's current status, discussed ongoing site improvement projects and highlighted recently signed agreements with new customers for the spaceport. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=5>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 3:42 p.m.

Tuesday, September 23

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:02 a.m.

Water, Agriculture and Energy Research Activities at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) (9:05 a.m.)

John Montgomery, Ph.D., assistant vice president for research and Graduate School dean, ENMU, presented on ENMU's research programs and gave examples of university faculty and student research in the fields of water, agriculture and energy. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=6>.

Cybersecurity Needs at Institutions of Higher Learning — Consortium of Higher Education Computing and Community Services (9:38 a.m.)

Duane Arruti, chief information officer (CIO), University of New Mexico; Victor Leon, CIO, Central New Mexico Community College; Michael Acosta, CIO, Western New Mexico University; Mr. Sambandam; and Isaac Bush, CIO, Higher Education Department, discussed the impacts of cybersecurity events on higher education institutions and the role of the Consortium of Higher Education Computing and Communications Services. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=7>.

Executive Session (9:45 a.m.)

On a motion duly made and seconded, the committee entered a closed executive session regarding cybersecurity within state higher education institutions.

Cybersecurity Office: Looking at 2026 and Beyond (11:38 a.m.)

Mr. Sambandam presented on the Cybersecurity Office of the DoIT's plans and projections for fiscal year 2026 and following years. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=8>.

Water Reuse Project and Bull Testing Program at Agricultural Experiment Station Update (12:54 p.m.)

Jay Lillywhite, Ph.D., associate dean and director, Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, New Mexico State University (NMSU); Marcy Ward, extension livestock specialist, Range Improvement Task Force, NMSU; and Leonard Lauriault, former research director, Rex E. Kirksey Agricultural Science Center at Tucumcari, NMSU, presented on the Rex E. Kirksey Agricultural Science Center at Tucumcari's research projects in wastewater reuse and livestock testing. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=9>.

Department of Public Safety Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) Project (1:36 p.m.)

W. Troy Weisler, chief, New Mexico State Police Division, Department of Public Safety, provided an update on the status of the ILP project and discussed the advantages of the project's integrated law enforcement database.

Virtual Power Plants: Using Distributed Grid Generation and Storage to Increase Power Grid Flexibility and Meet Demand Fluctuations (2:22 p.m.)

Jim DesJardins, executive director, Renewable Energy Industries Association of New Mexico, gave a presentation on the "virtual power plant" concept and discussed the possibility of legislation to enable the implementation of virtual power plants in New Mexico. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=STTC&Date=9/22/2025&ItemNumber=11>.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.