

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

**December 8, 2025
State Capitol, Room 322
Santa Fe**

The fifth meeting of the Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee was called to order by Senator Angel M. Charley, chair, at 9:32 a.m. on December 8, 2025 in Room 322 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

Present

Sen. Angel M. Charley, Chair
Sen. Pat Boone
Rep. Martha Garcia
Sen. Antonio Maestas
Rep. Marian Matthews
Sen. Micaelita Debbie O'Malley
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Rep. Sarah Silva
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

Advisory Members

Sen. Heather Berghmans
Rep. Catherine J. Cullen
Sen. David M. Gallegos

Absent

Rep. Doreen Y. Gallegos, Vice Chair
Rep. Janelle Anyanonu
Rep. Gail Armstrong
Sen. Jay C. Block
Sen. Crystal Brantley
Rep. Nicole Chavez
Rep. Joshua N. Hernandez
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Rep. Linda Serrato
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

Rep. Meredith A. Dixon
Sen. Natalie Figueroa
Rep. Anita Gonzales
Rep. Jenifer Jones
Sen. Steve D. Lanier
Rep. Raymundo Lara
Rep. Charlotte Little
Rep. Stefani Lord
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Rep. Jimmy G. Mason
Rep. Rod Montoya
Rep. Mark B. Murphy
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Sen. William E. Sharer
Sen. Nicole Tobiassen
Sen. James G. Townsend

Staff

Erin Bond, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)

Nancy Martinez, Bill Drafter, LCS

Gabriel Suazo, Intern, LCS

Minutes Approval

Because the committee will not meet again this year, the minutes for this meeting have not been officially 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, December 8**Welcome and Introductions (9:32 a.m.)**

Senator Charley welcomed everyone to the meeting, and members of the committee introduced themselves.

New Mexico Grocers Association (9:37 a.m.)

Henry Sandoval, executive director, New Mexico Grocers Association, introduced Ryan Doyle, owner, Intrepid Wholesale, LLC, and Breck Stewart, member, Executive Board, New Mexico Grocers Association, and emphasized how crime has impacted grocers in New Mexico, particularly in rural communities. They said that with limited resources in food supply and an increase in retail theft, many grocers have been forced to hire private security, which further increases grocery prices for consumers. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=12/8/2025&ItemNumber=1>.

Trade Ports in New Mexico (10:33 a.m.)

Charles Remkes, P.E., manager, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Department of Transportation, said that both domestic and international freight logistics have grown more complex. Marcos A. Gonzales, M.B.A., executive development officer, Economic Development, Bernalillo County, said that the Interstate 40 TradePort Corridor anticipates

creating 60,000 new jobs in New Mexico and Arizona hubs. Anthony Dimas, county manager, McKinley County, said that the Gallup-McKinley TradePort is a collaborative public-private effort among the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation, the City of Gallup and McKinley County. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=12/8/2025&ItemNumber=2>.

Housing, Short-Term Rentals and Economic Development (11:31 a.m.)

Robyn Powell, senior director of policy and planning, New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, said that Housing New Mexico's mission is to create more housing, preserve and improve existing housing, create homeownership opportunities and create stable housing environments. Carl Vidal, chief executive officer, Irvie Homes, said that short-term rentals face the challenge of tax assessments and classifying homes as nonresidential. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=12/8/2025&ItemNumber=3>.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Libraries' Role in Rural New Mexico (1:04 p.m.)

Shel Neymark, executive director, New Mexico Rural Library Initiative, introduced Aspen Coriz-Romero, fellow, New Mexico Rural Library Initiative, and said that rural libraries are often the only infrastructure in the towns that they are in and that aside from providing library services, they tend to provide early childhood education, after-school programs, adult education and economic development. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=12/8/2025&ItemNumber=4>.

New Mexico Food Banks (1:56 p.m.)

Jill Dixon, executive director, The Food Depot, introduced Katy Anderson, vice president, Strategy, Partnerships and Advocacy, Roadrunner Food Bank, and said that there are over 500 distribution sites and food access in all 33 counties in New Mexico. Ms. Anderson explained that the healthy corner store model is an approach in which convenience stores are supported in offering a wider range of nutritious food options and that the goal of this model is to expand healthy food access in neighborhoods where larger, traditional retail stores may struggle to operate or reach consistently. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=12/8/2025&ItemNumber=5>.

Rural Chambers of Commerce (2:25 p.m.)

Bill Lee, chief executive officer, Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce; Jessica Bollema, executive director, Artesia Chamber of Commerce; and Hayley Klein, city administrator, City of Artesia, spoke on challenges that the City of Artesia, the City of Gallup and McKinley County face, as well as the areas' strengths. Mr. Lee noted that the City of Gallup continues to rank high in crime statistics, with repeat offenders cycling in and out of the criminal justice system and repeatedly targeting the same businesses. He also highlighted threats to the medical field, including ongoing issues with medical malpractice statutes, which have contributed to a shortage of medical providers and have placed additional strain on rural communities in New Mexico. Ms. Bollema said that the City of Artesia prides itself on its high school football team and its geographical accessibility to other towns in the southeastern part of the state. Ms. Klein discussed staffing shortages and broader health care concerns that are prompting many residents to seek medical care in neighboring states.

Consideration of Legislation for Endorsement (2:51 p.m.)

The committee discussed legislation for endorsement, but the legislation was not endorsed. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=12/8/2025&ItemNumber=7>.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.