

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

**October 7, 2025
State Capitol, Room 307
Santa Fe**

The fifth meeting of the Land Grant Committee was called to order by Senator Leo Jaramillo, vice chair, on October 7, 2025 at 9:01 a.m. in Room 307 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

Present

Sen. Leo Jaramillo, Vice Chair
Rep. Miguel P. García
Rep. Anita Gonzales*
Rep. Susan K. Herrera
Rep. Matthew McQueen
Rep. Angelita Mejia
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics
Sen. Anthony L. Thornton
Rep. E. Diane Torres-Velásquez

Absent

Rep. Linda Serrato, Chair
Sen. Angel M. Charley
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Rep. Stefani Lord
Sen. Antonio Maestas

Advisory Members

Rep. Catherine J. Cullen
Rep. Rod Montoya

Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Sen. Linda M. López
Rep. Jimmy G. Mason
Sen. Micaelita Debbie O'Malley
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez

*Appointed by the speaker of the house or the president pro tempore of the senate as a voting member for this meeting only.

Staff

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

Minutes Approval

Because the committee will not meet again this interim, 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.

Tuesday, October 7

Welcome and Introductions (9:01 a.m.)

Senator Jaramillo welcomed everyone and asked committee members and staff to introduce themselves.

Approval of Committee Letter to United States Office of Congressional Conduct (9:18 a.m.)

Upon a motion and without objection, the committee approved a letter to the United States Office of Congressional Conduct requesting clarification of the rules regarding the ability of congressional staff to appear before state legislative committees to provide information.

Consideration of Legislation for Endorsement (9:19 a.m.)

The committee considered and endorsed the following three bills for the 2026 legislative session:

232274.3, a bill to enact the Land Grant-Merced and Acequia Infrastructure Act and to create trust funds and project funds for building infrastructure or improving existing infrastructure at land grants-mercedes and acequias;

232275.1, a bill to amend the Land Grant-Merced Assistance Fund to change the requirements for full and 75 percent distributions from the fund and to make the fund nonreverting; and

232276.1, a bill to increase the annual transfer amounts from the New Mexico Irrigation Works Construction Fund to the Acequia and Community Ditch Infrastructure Fund. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=10/7/2025&ItemNumber=2>.

Approval of Committee Letter to Department of Finance and Administration (10:28 a.m.)

Upon a motion and without objection, the committee approved a letter to the Department of Finance and Administration requesting the department to include full funding for the community governance attorney program when the department develops the governor's proposed budget for fiscal year 2027.

Updates from the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant-Merced (10:31 a.m.)

Nobert LeDoux, president and chairman, Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant-Merced, and Mike Howsden, secretary, Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant-Merced, outlined the challenges facing the land grant-merced due to the *lineas* plat map created by the Taos County Assessor for the land grant-merced in the early 1940s. At the request of a committee member, Arturo Archuleta, program manager, Land Grant Council/Land Grant Studies Program, University of New Mexico, and Enrique Romero, assistant attorney general and director, Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty Division, State Department of Justice, joined the panel to discuss efforts to develop legislative recommendations to address the issue. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=10/7/2025&ItemNumber=3>.

Assistance from State Agencies for Outdoor Recreation in Rural Communities (11:18 a.m.)

Michael B. Sloane, director, Department of Game and Fish, and Toby Velasquez, director, State Parks Division, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, provided an overview of how the missions and programs of their respective agencies interact with rural communities. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=10/7/2025&ItemNumber=4>.

Discussion of The Las Vegas Land Grant Governance (1:43 p.m.)

The Honorable Michael Aragon, judge, Fourth Judicial District, and Edward Sena, president, The Las Vegas Land Grant, provided an overview of the complexity of governance of the land grant due to having a board appointed by a district court rather than an elected board. Mr. Archuleta was requested to join the panel to provide a historical perspective of why The Las Vegas Land Grant is governed by its unique statute.

State and Federal Forestry Resources (2:23 p.m.)

James Duran, forest supervisor, Carson National Forest, United States Forest Service; Belinda Mollard, northern New Mexico traditional cultures and government liaison, United States Forest Service; and Laura McCarthy, state forester, Forestry Division, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, reported on their respective agencies and how those agencies interact with land grant-merced communities. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LGC&Date=10/7/2025&ItemNumber=6>.

Public Comment (3:29 p.m.)

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

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.