

**MINUTES
of the
THIRD MEETING
of the
INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**August 14-15, 2025
Taos Civic Center, El Taoseno Room
120 Civic Plaza Drive
Taos**

The third meeting of the Indian Affairs Committee was called to order by Senator Shannon D. Pinto, chair, at 10:10 a.m. on Thursday, August 14, 2025, at the Taos Civic Center in Taos.

Present

Sen. Shannon D. Pinto, Chair
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, Vice Chair (8/15)
Rep. Michelle Paulene Abeyta
Rep. John Block
Rep. Rebecca Dow*
Rep. Joseph Franklin Hernandez
Rep. Charlotte Little
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

Advisory Members

Rep. Debra M. Sariñana
Sen. William P. Soules

Absent

Sen. Angel M. Charley
Rep. Martha Garcia
Sen. Nicholas A. Paul
Sen. William E. Sharer
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.

Rep. Yanira Gurrola
Sen. Linda M. López
Rep. Stefani Lord
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Rep. Angelita Mejia
Sen. George K. Muñoz
Sen. Cindy Nava
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson

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

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

Staff

Nicole Waguespack, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Paul Estok, Staff Attorney, LCS
Sheila Keleher, Researcher, 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 on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Thursday, August 14

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

Senator Pinto welcomed everyone. Members of the committee and the public introduced themselves.

An Overview of the State-Tribal Collaboration Act (10:14 a.m.)

Mr. Estok presented an overview of the State-Tribal Collaboration Act, beginning with its formulation and passage and moving through the annual information publication required by the act. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=8/14/2025&ItemNumber=1>.

Breaking Ground: Removing Roadblocks for Tribal Homeownership (11:11 a.m.)

Christopher Billey, executive director, Tribal Homeownership Coalition of the Southwest (THOCSW), and Crystal Carr Cook, Ph.D., policy analyst and data specialist, THOCSW, gave a presentation detailing the THOCSW's mission. Mr. Billey presented historical and current data on homeownership on tribal land and approaches to expanding homeownership by tribal members throughout the state. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=8/14/2025&ItemNumber=2>.

Navajo Preparatory School (NPS) Update (2:11 p.m.)

Shawna Allison Becenti, head of school, NPS, presented a video documenting achievements at the school and outlined new and continuing educational opportunities for students at the school. Ms. Becenti; Darah Tabrum, Ph.D., associate head of school for

advancement and outreach, NPS; and Robert Apodaca, consultant and lobbyist, NPS, responded to questions. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=8/14/2025&ItemNumber=3>.

Update from the Office of Indian Elder Affairs at the Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) (3:27 p.m.)

Emily Kaltenbach, secretary, ALTSD, and Melissa Sanchez, director, Office of Indian Elder Affairs, ALTSD, gave an overview of the ALTSD and highlighted the department's accomplishments and goals for the next four years centered around the department's State Plan on Aging. Kaltenbach submitted the ALTSD's 2025 State-Tribal Collaboration Act report for the committee's consideration. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=8/14/2025&ItemNumber=4>.

Motion To Send Letters (4:25 p.m.)

On a motion made by Representative Hernandez and seconded by Representative Block, the committee voted without objection to send letters of support to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Taxation and Revenue Committee, encouraging increased funding for several special projects at NPS.

Approval of Minutes (4:26 p.m.)

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, and without any objections, the committee approved the minutes of the July 16-18, 2025 meeting.

Update on the Turquoise Alert System (4:26 p.m.)

Lieutenant Philip Vargas, New Mexico State Police Division, Department of Public Safety (NMSP), and Sergeant Ricardo Breceda, NMSP, provided a description of the requirements of the new Turquoise Alert System and outlined how the system has been used since its inception.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 5:43 p.m.

Friday, August 15

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:55 a.m.

The 2025 Regular Session by the Numbers (9:55 a.m.)

Anthony "T.J." Trujillo, Trujillo Law Group, and Jennifer Trujillo, Trujillo Law Group, gave a presentation that looked at the New Mexico legislature and the 2025 regular session,

breaking data into numerous categories and reviewing the legislative process. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=8/14/2025&ItemNumber=6>.

Review of State-Federal Litigation (10:56 a.m.)

Anjana Samant, deputy counsel for impact litigation, State Department of Justice (NMDOJ), reviewed litigation by the NMDOJ against the federal government and federal agencies, primarily over federal funding due the state.

Motion To Draft Letter (11:30 a.m.)

On a motion made by Representative Abeyta and seconded by Representative Hernandez, the committee voted to have a letter of support drafted supporting increased funding for the NMDOJ for litigation challenging federal government action. The committee will review the letter at its September 25-26, 2025 meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.