

HOUSE BILL 16

**55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2021**

INTRODUCED BY

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This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

AN ACT

RELATING TO THE LEGISLATURE; CREATING THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE; ESTABLISHING MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES; REQUIRING REPORTS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

**SECTION 1. TEMPORARY PROVISION--RURAL OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE--CREATED--TERMINATION.--**There is created a joint interim legislative committee that shall be known as the "rural

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opportunity committee". The committee shall function from the date of its appointment until the first day of December prior to the first session of the fifty-sixth legislature.

SECTION 2. TEMPORARY PROVISION--MEMBERSHIP--  
APPOINTMENTS.--

A. The rural opportunity committee shall be composed of fourteen members. Eight members of the house of representatives shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, and six members of the senate shall be appointed by the committees' committee of the senate or, if the senate appointments are made in the interim, by the president pro tempore of the senate after consultation with and agreement of a majority of the members of the committees' committee.

B. Members shall be appointed from each house so as to give:

(1) the two major political parties in each house the same proportional representation on the committee as prevails in each house; however, in no event shall either party have less than one member from each house on the committee;

HSEIC→and←HSEIC

HSEIC→(2) equitable representation from rural areas in each quadrant of the state; and←HSEIC

HSEIC→(2)←HSEIC HSEIC→(3)←HSEIC  
representation HLLC→to←HLLC HLLC→from←HLLC the membership of each of the following interim committees, to be made in

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consultation with the appropriate chair of that committee to ensure accountability:

- (a) the legislative finance committee;
- (b) the legislative education study committee;
- (c) the legislative health and human services committee;
- (d) the revenue stabilization and tax policy committee;
- (e) the New Mexico finance authority oversight committee; and
- (f) the appropriate interim committees or subcommittees that deal with: 1) water and natural resources; 2) rural and economic development; 3) Indian affairs; 4) land grants; 5) science, technology and telecommunications; and 6) transportation infrastructure.

C. Vacancies on the committee shall be filled by appointment in the same manner as the original appointments. At the request of the committee chair, members may be removed from the committee by the New Mexico legislative council for nonattendance according to council policy. For the interim occurring during the 2021 calendar year, the speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint the chair of the committee, and the president pro tempore of the senate shall appoint the vice chair of the committee. For the interim

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occurring during the 2022 calendar year, the president pro tempore of the senate shall appoint the chair of the committee, and the speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint the vice chair of the committee.

D. No action shall be taken by the committee if a majority of the total membership from either house on the committee rejects such action.

**SECTION 3. TEMPORARY PROVISION--DUTIES.--**After its appointment, the rural opportunity committee shall hold one organizational meeting to develop a work plan and budget for the ensuing interim. The work plan and budget shall be submitted to the New Mexico legislative council for approval. Upon approval of the work plan and budget by the legislative council, the committee shall:

A. review issues affecting rural areas of the state;

B. identify barriers to economic and educational opportunities in rural areas of the state and propose policies to reduce or eliminate those barriers;

C. assess all potential funding sources and opportunities for investment in infrastructure, economic development, education and health care in rural areas of the state;

D. develop a long-term plan to address rural needs, including the development of a rural relief legislative

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proposal that leverages bonding capacity, capital outlay funding and general fund appropriations, to provide for rural economic development;

E. review current tax policy, including credits, rebates and deductions, to ensure equity between urban and rural communities;

F. coordinate with the office of the governor to develop proposals;

G. coordinate and meet concurrently, whenever practicable, with other legislative interim committees that address similar issues;

H. propose legislation to maximize public and private investments in rural communities and to foster the health and well-being of all residents of rural areas of the state; and

I. develop a legislative proposal to ensure access for every New Mexican to running water, wastewater treatment services, electricity and broadband internet that provides benchmarks and tracks yearly progress.

**SECTION 4. TEMPORARY PROVISION--REPORT.--**The committee shall make a report of its findings and recommendations for the consideration of each session of the legislature. The report and suggested legislation shall be made available to the New Mexico legislative council on or before December 15 preceding each session.

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SECTION 5. TEMPORARY PROVISION--STAFF.--The staff for the rural opportunity committee shall be provided by the legislative council service.

SECTION 6. EMERGENCY.--It is necessary for the public peace, health and safety that this act take effect immediately.

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