

April 11, 2025

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 23

The Honorable Javier Martínez, Speaker of the House and
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Honorable Speaker Martínez and Members of the House:

I have decided to veto HOUSE APPROPRIATION & FINANCE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL 191 (“HB 191”), which would have created two wildfire-related permanent funds, only one of which the Legislature “funded” with a meager one-time \$12 million appropriation.

The wildfire suppression fund is a good idea on its face. However, the Legislature did not provide any money for it, instead requiring all federal reimbursements for wildfire suppression costs or out-of-state assignments for state crews to be deposited into the fund. Given the snail’s pace of federal reimbursements—which have only gotten slower in recent months—relying on that funding stream does not set this program up for success. I will, however, require the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department’s Forestry Division and the State Fire Marshal’s Office to collaborate on outreach to the public to educate homeowners on effective means to minimize the risk to private property from wildfires.

The post-wildfire fund received only a one-time \$12 million appropriation. Put simply, that is not nearly enough money to even put a dent in post-fire recovery operations. For example, the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management estimates that the cost for post-fire recovery from fires and related floods in 2024 will exceed \$200,000,000 for Ruidoso alone.

Notably, however, I did sign Senate Bill 33, the Wildfire Prepared Act. That bill created a Fire Planning Task Force that will develop guidelines and eligibility criteria for the Wildfire Prepared Program over the next several months. The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department will be able to submit a budget request for a grant program and staff to administer the program, achieving similar objectives to HB 191.

I fully support a revamped process to fund both pre- and post-wildfire maintenance. I hope the Legislature will provide a meaningful way to accomplish that goal during the 2026 legislative session.

Because of these issues, and pursuant to my authority under Article IV, Section 22 of the New Mexico Constitution, I have vetoed HOUSE APPROPRIATION & FINANCE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL 191, enacted by the Fifty-Seventh Legislature, First Session, 2025.

Respectfully yours,

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

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Time: _____ a.m. p.m.
Date: _____ 2025

By _____
Secretary of State

Time: _____ a.m. p.m.
Date: _____ 2025

By _____
Chief Clerk of the House