

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

**July 16-17, 2012  
Questa Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall  
Questa, New Mexico**

The second meeting of the Land Grant Committee was called to order at 10:41 a.m. on July 16, 2012 by Senator Richard C. Martinez, chair, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall in Questa, New Mexico.

**Present**

Sen. Richard C. Martinez, Chair  
Rep. Miguel P. Garcia, Vice Chair  
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon  
Rep. Alonzo Baldonado  
Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino  
Rep. Debbie A. Rodella  
Sen. Bernadette M. Sanchez

**Absent**

Sen. Rod Adair  
Rep. Paul C. Bandy  
Rep. Eleanor Chavez  
Rep. Jimmie C. Hall  
Sen. Sander Rue

**Advisory Members**

Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros  
Rep. Jim W. Hall  
Rep. Richard D. Vigil

Rep. Joni Marie Gutierrez  
Rep. Ben Lujan  
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom  
Sen. David Ulibarri

**Guest Legislator**

Rep. Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales

**Staff**

Douglas Carver, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)  
Peter Kovnat, Staff Attorney, LCS  
Melissa Candelaria, Law School Intern, LCS  
Alexandria Tapia, Legislative Intern, LCS

**Guests**

The guest list is in the meeting file.

**Handouts**

Handouts are in the meeting file.

## **Monday, July 16**

### **Welcoming Remarks and Introductions**

Senator Martinez welcomed committee members, staff and the public to the meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves, and he thanked the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant for hosting the meeting.

### **History of San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant (Questa) and Update on Request that the New Mexico Congressional Delegation Give Political Subdivision Status to Non-Patent Land Grants**

Esther García, mayor, Village of Questa, and president, San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant Board, explained that San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant is the name of the original land grant, but the grant is commonly referred to as the Questa Land Grant. A top priority for the land grant is to obtain recognition as a political subdivision by the state. Mayor García thanked Senator Cisneros for introducing Senate Bill 40 (2011 legislative session) to accomplish this. She said that while the bill was vetoed by the governor, she encourages the committee to continue its efforts to assist the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant to receive political subdivision status. Mayor García noted that the New Mexico congressional delegation will not move to confirm the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant's patent without the state's recognition of it as a political subdivision.

There was discussion among the committee members regarding SB 40. The bill never reached the governor's desk for consideration; rather, it was an appropriation to the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant that was vetoed. Nonetheless, the committee agreed that the goal remains to assist the land grant to obtain political subdivision status so that it can pursue action at the congressional level to get the land grant patented. Committee members suggested that a future bill not include an appropriation in order to increase the chances of getting it through the legislative process and to the governor's desk.

### *Motion 1*

Senator Sanchez moved that the committee endorse a bill to grant the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant political subdivision status. The motion was seconded by Representative Rodella and passed, with all voting members present voting in favor. The committee requested that the LCS draft the bill without an appropriation for approval at the last committee meeting.

There was further discussion regarding previous efforts to educate the governor about New Mexico's land grants and encourage her to support land grant bills endorsed by the committee. For example, there was a bipartisan effort by certain members of the committee last session to call and write to the governor requesting support for land grant bills. It was mentioned that it appears that land grants are not a priority for the executive branch. Further, the committee believes that it is important that the United States Congress take action to patent the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant independently from the state's action on the political subdivision issue.

LCS staff informed the committee that invitations are sent to the congressional offices inviting their attendance at committee meetings. Members of the committee stressed the importance of the congressional representatives being present to hear the concerns of the land grant communities and suggested that a similar letter be sent to the United States Forest Service, the United States National Park Service and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Members of the committee assured Mayor García that they will support legislation granting political subdivision status to the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant. Representative Gonzales said that he would co-sign the bill when it reaches the New Mexico House of Representatives. Mayor García thanked the committee for its support.

Mayor García provided a brief history of the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant. She informed the committee that all the necessary work has been done to position the land grant to be a political subdivision. The land grant has also completed the required land grant boundary survey to be in a position to request Congress to patent the land grant. She mentioned that the completed survey incorporates the Cañon del Rio Colorado as part of the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant.

Members of the committee questioned what would happen to the Village of Questa should the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant become a political subdivision of the state; for instance, whether there are any issues related to funding both entities simultaneously. It was noted that there would be no conflict because the Village of Questa and San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant are two separate entities. Further, there are currently multiple political subdivisions located within the same area that receive some level of state funding. Mayor García added that acequias located within the Village of Questa are political subdivisions of the state and receive state funding. These entities have not experienced any conflicts with regard to receiving or soliciting funding. Another committee member shared that Santa Cruz Land Grant works with the county government to build facilities as an example of how two political subdivisions can work together.

The committee concluded the discussion on the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant by thanking Mayor García for her work and advocacy on behalf of the land grant community and the Village of Questa.

#### **Update on Tierra Amarilla Land Grant Board and the Wind River Energy Corporation**

Mario R. Martinez, president, Tierra Amarilla Land Grant Board, said he was there to provide information on the ongoing issues concerning the land grant. Mr. Martinez informed the committee that the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant possesses a United States patent acknowledging it as a community land grant. Senator Martinez asked Mr. Martinez to summarize the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant Board's dealings with the Wind River Energy Corporation (Wind River), including the alleged waiver of mineral rights and the fallout resulting from that waiver.

Mr. Martinez denied any business dealings or association with Wind River. He told the committee that he and Dennis Wells, former president of the land grant board, entered into a contract several years ago with a different oil company. That contract allowed the oil company

to explore for oil within the land grant, and in return, the oil company was supposed to compensate the land grant heirs at a rate of \$10.00 per barrel of oil produced. The contract also included a waiver that other oil companies would be precluded from searching for oil on the land grant. Mr. Martinez stated that he and Mr. Wells signed the contract with the oil company believing that the land grant belonged to them.

Mr. Martinez does not recall ever reviewing or signing a waiver of the land grant's mineral rights. Responding to a question on whether the signatures on the waiver agreement between the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant Board and Wind River were legitimate, Mr. Martinez stated that the signatures were real; the signatures, however, were to another document that he and other members of the board had signed. He asserted that he would never agree to sell or sign a document waiving the land grant heirs' mineral rights because he does not possess the right to take such action. Mr. Martinez said that Mr. Wells had presented him with the waiver, but he refused to sign it after reading the terms of the agreement.

There was discussion over the organization of the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant and whether it is organized under Chapter 49 NMSA 1978 or as an independent association. Further, committee members asked Mr. Martinez what happened to the \$233,000 check issued by Wind River to the land grant board. Mr. Martinez could not definitively answer the question.

Members of the committee questioned if Wind River had done any work since it came before the committee in 2011. Mr. Martinez replied that had no knowledge regarding Wind River's work. The committee said it supports land grants but also expects them to be in compliance with the law. In response to a committee member's question about whether Tierra Amarilla Land Grant community members will pursue litigation against Wind River, Mr. Martinez said the members have not made any claims. Further, he said the community wants to protect its land, its tax base and the nine oil wells located on the land grant.

Members asked whether the federal or county governments ordered a moratorium to stop Wind River from doing work on the land grant. Mr. Martinez stated that it is difficult to work with Rio Arriba County, and the board has been denied the use of the county complex to hold its meetings. The committee asked that Wind River and Rio Arriba County be invited to the next committee meeting.

Committee members were interested in Mr. Martinez's mention of a contract that would compensate heirs \$10.00 a barrel for oil produced from the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant. The committee asked if that contract was different from the contract with the corporation.

The committee recalled Mr. Martinez's testimony in 2011 that the \$233,000 check would cover administrative purposes and legal fees. Mr. Martinez said that he never saw the check, but when he learned about a check being deposited, he instructed Mr. Wells to return the check.

Daniel O. Martinez, vice president of the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant Board, supported Mario Martinez's statement that he never saw the check and the controversy stemmed from Mr. Wells' unilateral actions. Members of the committee said the fact remains that there is a signed

and notarized contract between Wind River and the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant Board, as well as a \$233,000 check that was deposited by the land grant board.

Members of the committee suggested that Mario Martinez seek assistance from the state auditor or attorney general regarding the contract and in the event that Wind River begins work as authorized under the contract. It was also noted that if there is fraud involved, the committee has the ability to enlist the involvement of the Attorney General's Office. Mario Martinez indicated that the land grant board would be interested in pursuing the matter of potential fraud. The committee requested staff to research the appropriate investigating authority to address this matter.

Members of the committee inquired about the board's bank account and which board member accepted the check from the corporation. Mario Martinez was unable to provide an answer, but he asserted that it was Mr. Wells, the former president of the board, who acted alone and without the knowledge of the rest of the board.

Dr. Manuel Griego y Garcia of the University of New Mexico (UNM) Land Grant Studies Program was invited to clarify the status of the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant for the committee. He said it is clear that the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant is a community land grant. It was erroneously listed as a private land grant in earlier documents. He suggested that for the purposes of the committee, it may be treated as a land grant; however, in a court there may be an issue. Dr. Griego y Garcia said it is not unusual to have land grants wrongly classified.

The committee advised Mario Martinez to bring to the next meeting all of the documents, including the patent, the original contract with the corporation and the check issued to the board. Further, the committee asked Mario Martinez to bring the other board members with him to the meeting. In the meantime, the committee requested that LCS staff draft a letter to the attorney general and the state auditor requesting them to look into the issues with the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant.

The committee asked how often the land grant board meets, how it conducts elections and if it has established bylaws. Mario Martinez said the land grant board has not met, and elections have not been held, but that it has adequate bylaws. The committee reminded the land grant board to adhere to the law as it moves forward. The committee ended the discussion with plans to revisit this issue at the August meeting.

### **Report on the Status of Quiet Title Actions Involving the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant and Arroyo Hondo Land Grant**

Darren Cordova, mayor of Taos, told the committee that he is committed to supporting the land grants' efforts to preserve their lands and mentioned that he is an heir to the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant. With regard to the Arroyo Hondo Land Grant, Mayor Cordova reported that a consensus was reached among the parties to request a declaratory judgment to remove the cloud over the titles, which the district court granted. As a result of the court's decision to void the deeds at issue, it is freeing up properties by allowing owners to obtain title insurance on their properties. There are no other claims by the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant at this time.

Mayor Cordova ended his presentation expressing his support of land grants maintaining their common lands; however, for titles that have been purchased or conveyed to property owners, he believes that there are equitable remedies for land disputes that also preserve the credibility and authority of land grants.

Eliu E. Romero, an attorney with much experience working on land grant issues, suggested that all land grants in Colorado, California, Arizona and New Mexico band together and file suit against the federal government for breaking the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. He suggested that the land grant heirs form a corporation to pool all the existing land grants, develop the lands and divide profits among the heirs. He surmised that the issue of quiet titles will remain until the federal government acknowledges the rights given to land grant heirs.

Brian James, attorney for the Town of Taos, focused his comments on House Bill 653 (2011 legislative session), which would have prohibited a person from knowingly preparing or presenting for recording a title document containing a false claim or title against real property or interest in real property. Mr. James requested that the committee consider a different approach to addressing false claims, such as the one taken by the State of Michigan that allows private individuals to file liens against property owners rather than impose criminal penalties.

Lawrence Ortiz, president of Arroyo Hondo Land Grant, stated that he is unable to provide details on the quiet title action involving approximately 5,000 homes in Taos. The Arroyo Hondo Land Grant has a patent issued by the federal government. He elaborated that the land grant board asked the land grant members to bring their titles or any documents that prove their right to the land grant. He maintains that there are those who reside on land grants within Taos County who do not have clear title to their properties. Mr. Ortiz thanked the committee for the opportunity to address the members and mentioned that he will try to bring the land grant's lawyer to present at a subsequent meeting.

Francisco "El Comanche" Gonzales of the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant explained that the land grant was confirmed as a private land grant by the Court of Private Land Claims and that this designation has led to the privatization of common lands. Without anyone left to protect the remaining common lands, illegal trash dumping and overgrazing of cattle have increased. He noted that a recent proposal to build another subdivision in the area is an effort by developers to break up the common lands and divide the community in order to pursue economic interests. He added that while there may be benefits to economic development, there are also negative impacts, such as the increased traffic and damage to sensitive areas like the watering holes located on land grants.

The Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant is looking at filing quiet title deeds on properties south of the Francisco Martinez ditch. The land grant board enlisted the help of an attorney to determine which areas are common lands and to file claims for those areas. Mr. Gonzales discussed the difficult task of determining who has title to the lands within the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant because earlier surveys showed boundaries that were incorrect. Finally, Mr. Gonzales said that a DVD highlighting the history of the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant is in the making and copies will be shared with committee members at a later date.

Members of the committee told Mr. Gonzales that Mayor Cordova reported that the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant board withdrew its liens on the properties in the Town of Taos and that this was a mutual decision by both parties. Mr. Gonzales responded that while the lifting of the clouds over the titles may have been beneficial to the town, the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant based its decision to withdraw the liens to allow more time to conduct another survey of the common lands. Based on the results of that survey, the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant may decide to re-file claims to the common lands located within the town. He asserted that land title companies have political influence over the executive and legislative branches that has resulted in legislation that benefits the companies or in the vetoing of bills that would assist land grants to stop encroachment and squatting on land grant lands.

The committee asked Mayor Cordova whether any claims have been filed for property south of the Martinez ditch. He answered that the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant board agreed to give up land titles north of the ditch. Although no claims have been filed for areas south of the ditch, the mayor is concerned about the private homes located there. Mayor Cordova asked how those property owners could protect their titles to the land. Further, with regard to the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant withdrawing its claims, Mayor Cordova said it was probably because it realized that existing law would have favored the Town of Taos. On this point, it was mentioned that the reason why the governor vetoed HB 653 is because she believed that current law already addresses clouding of titles. According to Mayor Cordova, the real issue is with the federal government's breach of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the need for compensation to the land grants for that breach.

Members of the committee were interested in potential solutions for clearing quiet title claims, including the mayor's recommendation for legislation allowing private individuals to file liens against property owners. The discussion turned to whether the true problem is with the clouding of titles or with the warranty deeds. The committee inquired about the tax status of common lands. Mr. Gonzales explained that the common lands are taxed based on how the land is used.

Mr. Gonzales informed the committee that the hot springs located within the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant common lands were recently transferred to the Pueblo of Taos. Initially, the private donor proposed to convey 150,000 acres of land and hot springs to the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant community. However, at the time the land grant board was not incorporated and could not accept the donated land. Taos County did not want the land either because it lacked funds to purchase or maintain the land. The Taos Land Trust ended up purchasing the land and, in turn, conveyed the hot springs to the Pueblo of Taos. Mr. Gonzales added that the land grant community did not have money to hire an attorney to file a stay until the land grant board could organize and hold a meeting on this issue.

Members of the committee asked what was the purpose for the Pueblo of Taos wanting the hot springs. Mr. Gonzales responded that the nonprofit Taos Land Trust needed a steward to take care of the land, and the Pueblo of Taos offered to serve in that role. A committee member noted that a similar situation happened in Cebolleta, in which a local tribe was given 150,000 acres of land and the Cebolleta Land Grant did not receive any lands. The committee asked if

the property, including the hot springs, was part of the 200,000 acres of common lands of the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant. Mr. Gonzales answered that it was part of the common lands.

Members of the committee returned to the discussion of private property owners of lands formerly belonging to common lands. Some committee members felt that it is unfair to take back lands that were rightfully purchased by private individuals or to ask families to leave their homes because of the alleged taking of, or encroachment on, common lands. Members of the committee said that there has to be a balancing of interests; on one hand, is the right of a private landowner to keep, buy or sell the land, and on the other, the right of land grants to protect and preserve common lands. Mr. Gonzales reacted to the discussion by stating that just because people acquire land and put their names on the titles does not make them the owners, especially if the land is acquired through fraudulent means. For this reason, the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant is asking for help to address fraudulent land claims of common lands, according to Mr. Gonzales.

Committee members agreed on the need for a concerted effort by the land grants to reacquire lands or get compensation for lands that have been lost, similar to collaborative efforts undertaken by Native American tribes, pueblos and nations. It was noted that if land grants want to use their common lands for economic development, it should lease the land rather than sell it in order to preserve land grants for future generations. The committee acknowledged the successes in assisting land grants to restore lands via numerous mechanisms.

Committee members expressed interest in exploring alternatives to HB 653, including the suggestion to give notice to property owners of liens filed. Additionally, committee members are interested in establishing a legal and educational fund to assist land grant communities with legal battles over common lands or to support initiatives aimed at educating the public about land grants. Another suggestion was to ask Congress to establish a trust fund for land grants. The committee inquired as to the land grants' top priorities it could help advocate for in the upcoming legislative session. Several ideas were proposed, such as providing a vehicle for collaboration with counties and other governmental entities to protect land grants, funding to support collaborative efforts by the land grants and lineas and funding to purchase lineas. It was mentioned that funding for the UNM's Land Grant Studies Program remains a priority.

### **Reexamination of Legislation Concerning Strengthening State Law on Quiet Title Actions and the Filing and Recording of False Documents of Title**

Ernesto Romero, an owner of a real estate company doing business in Taos for over 30 years, and his son, Paul Romero, president of the Taos County Association of Realtors and a member of the Realtors Association of New Mexico, made a presentation to the committee on the law concerning filing of false documents of title. Mr. Romero noted that he and his family are members of the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant, and he is personally committed to furthering the interests of the land grant. He became involved in the quiet title issue because he believes these actions hinder the free flow of commerce, generally, and affect property owners' ability to purchase title insurance on their properties, specifically.

Paul Romero said that from the Realtors' standpoint, HB 653 does not directly affect land grants. He likes the suggestion of amending the bill to eliminate criminal penalties. He stated that it was never the intent to impose criminal sanctions, and it was the Senate Judiciary Committee that added those provisions. Paul Romero maintains that the intent of the bill was to preserve private property rights. He suggested that before the committee pursues legislation for the upcoming session, it should wait to see what the court decides on this issue.

Paul Martinez, a land grant activist, said that land grants hold the title to the property and are the private property owners, while others only occupy the land. He told the committee that he has done extensive research on the history of land grants and has authored books on the subject. He said that private landowners do not have clear titles to the lands they occupy and possess only warranty deeds. He stated that the cases before the federal district court have to do with the individuals concerned with making a profit and participating in commerce.

### **Update on Federal Legislation Affecting Land Grants**

Juan Sanchez, chair of the Land Grant Council, and president of the Merced del Pueblo de Chilili, gave an update on several pieces of federal legislation affecting land grants. His office worked with the New Mexico congressional delegation on the bills.

First is a bill to be introduced by Congressman Ben Ray Lujan that deals with the San Joaquin de Chama Land Grant. The bill requests the secretary of agriculture to return a cemetery located within a designated wilderness area to the control of the land grant's board. The San Joaquin de Chama Land Grant is in communication with Congressman Lujan to finalize the bill. Next is an amendment to the federal Farm Bill introduced by Senator Tom Udall. The amendment directs the secretary of agriculture to set aside \$10 million for rural development to help land grants with economic and community development and entrepreneurship, among other initiatives. Although the senator's amendment failed to pass on a recent Senate floor vote, an identical amendment will be introduced by Congressman Lujan when the Farm Bill reaches the U.S. House of Representatives. Committee members asked Mr. Sanchez to give them an in-depth overview of the Farm Bill at a future date.

Committee members wondered about the status of a bill introduced by Senator Jeff Bingaman that would create a trust fund for land grants. Mr. Sanchez said that the idea was to establish a trust fund and to have the interest from the fund go to land grants. Ultimately, it appears to be more feasible to request set-aside funding rather than create the trust fund for land grants.

Another measure of interest to the congressional delegation is the use of lands currently held by the federal government that were once part of land grants. To buttress the argument for allowing land grant heirs to use such federal lands, there is a need to identify the traditional land uses and develop accurate maps. To facilitate that effort, phase 2 of the UNM Land Grant Studies Program mapping project is under way. Mr. Sanchez also mentioned the need to educate and convince the majority of Congress to support a bill to allow traditional use of federal lands.

Committee members asked about the definition of "heirs" as used in the proposed legislation. Mr. Sanchez responded that the language allows the board of trustees of each land grant to determine who the heirs are to the historical land grant boundaries.

Committee members wondered if it would be appropriate if the state established a trust fund or a set-aside fund for land grants and have Congress commit funds to the trust.

#### *Motion 2*

Representative Rodella moved to write a letter to the congressional delegation to inquire about this possibility. Senator Sanchez seconded the motion, which was passed without objection.

Committee members asked whether the Land Grant Consejo could put together a brief on the history and traditional uses of the Carnuel and Rio Colorado land grants. Mr. Sanchez noted that traditional use of common lands, such as grazing, hunting and fishing, is a question that recurs. Committee members suggested that the committee invite the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to discuss its process for issuing permits that may interfere with traditional use activities of land grant heirs.

Finally, committee members wanted to know the status of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the U.S. Forest Service and the Truchas Land Grant. Mr. Sanchez responded that it is difficult to schedule a meeting with the U.S. Forest Service supervisors in that area, though the land grant was successful in meeting with the district ranger and the southwest regional supervisors. The committee requested LCS staff to draft a letter to the congressional delegation asking what it is doing to facilitate the joint memorial and MOU, along with an inquiry into the status of the illegal fence in Abiquiu.

#### *Motion 3*

Representative Rodella moved to have a letter drafted to the congressional delegation regarding the MOU. Representative Garcia seconded the motion, and the motion was passed without objection.

The committee asked Mr. Sanchez to provide copies of the Land Grant Council's previous letters to the congressional delegation to support its inquiry as to the reason for the lack of response to these outstanding land grant issues.

#### **Information for Tour of Chevron Mine**

Mr. Carver gave the committee details concerning the tour of Chevron Corporation's Questa Mine on the following day.

#### **Public Comment**

Jerome Padilla, president of the Town of Atrisco Land Grant Board of Trustees, commented that land grant communities have been stripped of their wealth in terms of loss of land base. He believes in a proper chain of title and favors criminal penalties for those who

commit fraud by filing false claims. He said it is criminal to take away a land grant community's common lands and asked the committee to consider the risks associated with changing common land boundaries. He thinks it would be difficult to ask people to leave their properties, but the properties originally belonged to the land grants. He commented that land grant community members should elect officials who can represent their interests, and he hopes the land grants' issues are resolved during his grandson's lifetime.

Patricia Rael, a local land grant heir, reflected on the day's discussions. She said that it makes sense that if land grants are taken away from the heirs, the heirs should be compensated for the taking. She holds lands that belonged to her parents and said that if someone ever placed a lien on her land, it would devastate her. Though it would be heartbreaking to have to leave her land, she believes that the true owners should be compensated somewhere, somehow, and that it is fair payment.

Ann Galloway, a property owner in Santa Fe, requested assistance with her home loan as she is having trouble with her bank and wants to avoid foreclosure on her home. The committee suggested that she contact the New Mexico Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division for assistance.

Shirley Romero, a member of the San Luis Land Grant, informed the committee that New Mexico and Colorado are working on designating a portion of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as a state park. Regarding earlier discussions on private property and false title claims, she thinks that regardless of how a person comes into possession of property that was once part of land grant lands, the heirs of that land should be compensated. The issue, then, is how to calculate how much each heir is to be compensated. She personally would not take any money but would want the land that was stolen from her to be returned. She likes the idea of creating a legal defense fund for the land grants, but she sees a related challenge of raising money for the fund. Assistance with legal research and with the courts would be welcomed. She encouraged the committee to pass legislation to require schools to include lessons about land grants and acequias in their curricula.

Carmen Quintana, a Santa Fe resident and land grant heir, attended the meeting to find out which individual or entity in Questa sold water rights to Santa Fe County. A committee member answered that it was the Top of the World Farm that sold its water rights in the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Mayor García added that the Top of the World Farm sold its water rights to two individuals in Texas, who then sold it to Santa Fe County. Ms. Quintana disagreed with Congressman Lujan's bill that would create a special legal fund for land grants. Rather than a legal fund, she believes it would be better to return the land grant's taxing authority.

Elias Espinoza, a member of the Arroyo Hondo Land Grant, shared that he is a Vietnam veteran and has also fought for the land grants. He said that in the 1980s, the land grant fought the developers from building on its lands and won. He said that while the land grant community has not reacquired all the land it has lost, it will continue to work toward this goal. He encouraged the members to make the right decisions on the land grant issues before the committee.

**Recess**

The committee recessed at 4:03 p.m.

**Tuesday, July 17****Tour of Chevron Mine**

The committee reconvened at 9:00 a.m. for a tour of the Chevron Corporation's Questa Mine. Prior to the tour, Dave Patridge, president for Chevron Mine, and his staff provided information about the mine, explained Chevron's safety guidelines and stop-work authority and conducted a short hazard training.

The tour ended, and there being no further business, the committee adjourned at 1:00 p.m.