MINUTES
of the
FIFTH MEETING
of the
INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

October 29-30, 2026
Buffalo Thunder Resort, Pueblo Ballroom
30 Buffalo Thunder Trail
Pueblo of Pojoaque

The fifth meeting of the Indian Affairs Committee was called to order by Senator Shannon D. Pinto, chair, on Thursday, October 29, 2026, at 9:48 a.m. in the Pueblo Ballroom of the Buffalo Thunder Resort in the Pueblo of Pojoaque.

Present
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto, Chair
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, Vice Chair
Rep. Michelle Paulene Abeyta
Rep. John Block (10/30)
Sen. Angel M. Charley (10/29)
Rep. Martha Garcia
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.

Absent
Rep. Joseph Franklin Hernandez
Rep. Charlotte Little
Sen. William E. Sharer
Sen. Rex Wilson
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

Advisory Members
Sen. Linda M. López
Rep. Angelita Mejia
Rep. Rebecca Dow
Rep. Yanira Gurrola
Rep. Stefani Lord
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Sen. George K. Muñoz
Sen. Cindy Nava
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana
Sen. William P. Soules
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson

Guest Legislators
Sen. Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzalez (10/29)
Rep. Pamelya Herndon (10/30)
Rep. Tara L. Lujan (10/30)

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

Staff
Nicole Waguespack, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Sheila Keleher, Capital Outlay Program Coordinator, LCS
Paul Estok, Staff Attorney, 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 recorded 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, October 29

Welcome and Introductions (9:48 a.m.)
Senator Pinto welcomed everyone, and committee members introduced themselves.

Welcome and Update from the Pueblo of Pojoaque (9:57 a.m.)
Jenelle Roybal, governor, Pueblo of Pojoaque, and Christy Ladd, development and program administrator, Planning and Development Department, Pueblo of Pojoaque, reviewed the pueblo's infrastructure priorities for 2027, including wellness center renovations and completion of the Eagle Ridge soccer fields, and gave an update on active capital outlay and Tribal Infrastructure Fund projects and behavioral health programs. They also addressed concerns about the impact of online betting and billing disputes with the Office of the State Medical Investigator. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=1.

Approval of Minutes (10:56 a.m.)
On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the August 10-12, 2026 meeting were approved.

Tour of Pueblo of Pojoaque Behavioral Health Facility and Wellness Center and Poeh Cultural Center (10:58 a.m.)

The meeting recessed for a tour of the Pueblo of Pojoaque's behavioral health facility and wellness center and Poeh Cultural Center.

New Mexico State University (NMSU): Presidential Initiatives and the Indian Resources Development Program (IRDP) (1:37 p.m.)

Valerio Ferme, Ph.D., president, NMSU, discussed NMSU's dedication to strengthening NMSU's relationship with tribal communities and students through memoranda of understanding with the state's nations, tribes and pueblos. Cherylin Atcitty, director, Indian Resources Development, NMSU, provided a brief history of the IRDP and its role in self-determined economic development and reviewed the program's progress toward capacity building and educational programs for tribal professionals. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=2.

Fulfilling the Vision: Diné College's Path Forward Through Partnership and Investment (2:54 p.m.)

Deborah Jackson-Dennison, Ed.D., president, Diné College; Jennifer Holt, M.P.A., director of human resources and acting chief operations officer, Diné College; Arlando Teller, director of legislative and government affairs, Diné College; Harley Interpreter, legislative specialist, Diné College; and Kim Dominguez, Ph.D., Teacher Education Project director, Diné College, provided an update on Diné College's educational initiatives, capital projects and long-term vision for its Shiprock campus. Dr. Jackson-Dennison outlined the college's focus on preparing Native educators through culturally and linguistically responsive programs and highlighted partnerships with school districts to expand teacher preparation, bilingual education and leadership development. Ms. Holt reviewed capital improvement priorities, including a new student services center and a multipurpose agricultural center to support land-based learning. Dr. Dominguez discussed the growth of the teacher education program, which was developed to prepare culturally responsive educators for Native communities and improve educational outcomes for Native students. The program provides professional development for K-12 educators, partners with school districts to address teacher shortages and is expanding recruitment efforts through dual-credit programs, high school partnerships and future educator pathways. Presenters expressed appreciation for legislative support and encouraged continued partnership and investment in the college's educational and capital initiatives. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=3.

Senate Memorial (SM) 14 (2026) and the Legacy of Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women (3:58 p.m.)

Elena Giacci, anti sexual violence national trainer and advocate, discussed the implementation of SM 14 (2026), which addresses the forced and coerced sterilization of Indigenous women and women of color in New Mexico. She expressed concern that survivors, community members and experts have not been adequately included in the planning process and urged lawmakers to ensure that the work is guided by those most affected and remains transparent, trauma-informed and survivor-centered. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=4.

Approval of Motion to Send a Letter to the Indian Affairs Department (IAD) (4:09 p.m.)

On a motion duly made and seconded, the committee approved sending a letter to the IAD regarding implementation of SM 14 (2026), urging the department to engage affected communities and subject-matter experts and address concerns in a timely manner.

2030 Census: Opportunities and Impacts (4:12 p.m.)

Hannah Burling, president, League of Women Voters of New Mexico, and Robert Rhatigan, director, Geospatial and Population Studies Center, University of New Mexico, discussed the importance of and provided key recommendations for early preparation for the 2030 census, including fully funding the federal Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program, appointing a state LUCA liaison and strengthening state-tribal partnerships to ensure fair redistricting, equitable representation and the distribution of federal funding. Mr. Rhatigan noted that tribal communities remain vulnerable to undercounts because of address challenges, geographic remoteness and other barriers and highlighted successes during the 2020 LUCA process that identified missing housing units and helped produce one of the most accurate state counts in the nation. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=5.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 5:19 p.m.

Friday, October 30

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:57 a.m.

Update from the Pueblo of Tesuque (9:58 a.m.)

Mark Mitchell, governor, Pueblo of Tesuque; Sage Mountainflower, director, General Services Division, Pueblo of Tesuque; and Roman Duran, interim government affairs liaison, Pueblo of Tesuque, discussed funding needs for water and wastewater infrastructure, housing development, broadband access and community facilities in the pueblo and shared concerns about drought impacts, aging infrastructure and grant funding challenges. They raised concerns about federal legislation that could affect tribal sovereignty and consultation, potential impacts of a Los Alamos National Laboratory expansion on water resources and a proposed water tank for snowmaking at the Santa Fe Ski Basin and advocated for continued state investment to improve critical infrastructure, preserve cultural resources and protect water supplies in tribal communities. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=6.

Approval of Motions to Send Letters (10:48 a.m.)

On a motion made and seconded, the committee approved sending a letter to the attorney general, the IAD, the Department of Environment and other relevant state agencies to express concern regarding the impacts of federal Senate Bill 5653 on the state's nations, tribes and pueblos, including tribal sovereignty, government-to-government consultation, environmental and water resources protections and permitting processes. On a motion made and seconded, and with one objection, the committee voted to send a letter to the New Mexico congressional delegation to express opposition to federal Senate Bill 5653 due to its broad impacts and limited tribal involvement in its development.

Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD): Update from the Office of Indian Elder Affairs (11:27 a.m.)

Emily Kaltenbach, secretary, ALTSD; Alicia Gourd, supervisor, Office of Indian Elder Affairs, ALTSD; and Julie Sanchez, acting tribal liaison and director of policy, planning and special projects, ALTSD, provided an overview of services for tribal elders. Ms. Gourd discussed tribal elder service administration, including contract management, training, nutrition initiatives, funding coordination, outreach and technical assistance. Ms. Sanchez highlighted outcomes of the Tribal Aging Summit, including tribal input on aging services, Alzheimer's and dementia support, long-term planning and culturally relevant resources. Ms. Kaltenbach reported strong use of tribal elder service funding and the New Mexico Grown program and requested additional funding for tribal aging programs. The department's fiscal year 2027 and 2028 priorities include strengthening emergency response, improving nutrition services, expanding training and enhancing

collaboration with tribal communities and service providers. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=7.

The Indian Education Program and Education Funding Formula (12:28 p.m.)

KatieAnn Juanico, assistant secretary of Indian education and tribal liaison, Public Education Department, presented an update on the Indian Education Fund and discussed funding administration reforms developed in partnership with tribes, including upfront payments, nonreverting funds, streamlined agreements and a revised allocation formula that combines a base amount with student enrollment data. She reported that tribes are using the funding for staffing, tutoring, transportation, language and cultural programs and other student supports and emphasized the need for continued investment and capacity building to improve educational outcomes for Native American students. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=8.

Public Comment (1:29 p.m.)

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

New Mexico Food Banks: Challenges, Impacts and the Path Forward (1:52 p.m.)

Jill Dixon, executive director, The Food Depot, and president, New Mexico Association of Food Banks, and Katy Anderson, vice president, Strategy, Partnerships and Advocacy, Roadrunner Food Bank, discussed food insecurity in New Mexico and highlighted partnerships with tribal communities, expanded food distributions, culturally appropriate food programs and coordinated disaster response efforts. They reported rising demand for food assistance, reductions in federal food supplies, increased food and transportation costs and challenges related to federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participation and food access in rural and tribal communities. They noted that food banks have expanded despite the challenges, supported in part by state funding through the New Mexico Grown program and the Government Results and Opportunity Program Fund, and requested continued investment to improve food security statewide. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=9.

House Memorial 17 (2026): TV and Film Industry Task Force Report (2:45 p.m.)

Bronwen Murray, executive director, Colorado and New Mexico Locals, Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, reviewed performer safety issues in the entertainment industry. She discussed concerns about individuals charging aspiring performers and families substantial upfront fees for access to work, discussed research on protections used in other states and suggested considerations such as registration requirements for talent representatives, stronger protections for child performers and enhanced safeguards for minors' earnings. Melissa Salazar, director, Boards and Commissions Division, Regulation and Licensing Department, presented the TV and Film Industry Task Force findings, reporting that while the task force identified concerns related to performer recruitment, workplace protections and child performers, it concluded there is currently insufficient evidence to support new licensing or regulatory requirements. Instead, the task force recommended a data-gathering effort, creation of a reporting portal, enhanced industry education and outreach and continued evaluation of whether statutory action is warranted. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=10/29/2026&ItemNumber=10.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.