

**MINUTES
of the
THIRD MEETING
of the
RADIOACTIVE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COMMITTEE**

**September 20, 2021
Student Services and Technology Center 200
University of New Mexico-Gallup
705 Gurley Avenue
Gallup**

The third meeting of the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee was called to order by Senator Jeff Steinborn, chair, on September 20, 2021 at 9:13 a.m. at the University of New Mexico (UNM)-Gallup in Gallup.

Present

Sen. Jeff Steinborn, Chair
Rep. Christine Chandler, Vice Chair
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Joanne J. Ferrary
Rep. Stefani Lord
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana

Absent

Rep. Cathrynn N. Brown
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Sen. Gay G. Kernan
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna

Advisory Members

Sen. Harold Pope

Sen. Ron Griggs
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Sen. Gregg Schmedes
Rep. James G. Townsend

Guest Legislators

Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom

Staff

Shawna Casebier, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Sara Wiedmaier, LCS
Samantha DeLap, 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.

Monday, September 20

Welcome and Introductions (9:14 a.m.)

Senator Steinborn welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited members of the committee to introduce themselves.

Dr. James Malm, chancellor, UNM-Gallup, welcomed the committee, staff and guests to Gallup and provided a brief overview of some of the programs, opportunities and challenges at UNM-Gallup. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/RHMC%20092021%20Item%201%20University%20of%20New%20Mexico%20-%20Gallup.pdf>.

The Legacy of Uranium Mining, Community Impacts, Cleanup and Challenges (9:26 a.m.)

Rebecca Roose, deputy secretary, Department of Environment (NMED), and Kurt Vollbrecht, program manager, Mining Environmental Compliance Section, NMED, discussed the background and regulatory landscape around cleanup of uranium mines throughout New Mexico and the Navajo Nation.

Valinda Shirley, executive director, Environmental Protection Agency, Navajo Nation, discussed the history of the agency, the work being done to address mine waste and abandoned mine sites and the environmental laws specific to the Navajo Nation.

Teracita Keyanna, member, Steering Committee, Red Water Pond Road Community Association, and Susan Gordon, coordinator, Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment, discussed the community health impacts of abandoned uranium mine sites and past spills on the Navajo Nation, as well as current outreach initiatives, health and environmental studies and cleanup proposals.

Rose Elizabeth Rohrer, research scientist, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UNM, discussed the potential of uranium mine cleanup and environmental remediation as a target industry for job creation and economic growth in New Mexico. The presentations can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=RHMC&Date=9/20/2021&ItemNumber=2>.

Motion to Send a Letter in Support of Funding for the Remediation of Abandoned Mines (11:12 a.m.)

On a motion made by Senator Pinto and seconded by Representative Sariñana, the committee voted to send a letter to United States Senator Joe Manchin and others in support of funding included in the bipartisan infrastructure framework by United States Senator Martin Heinrich for an abandoned hardrock mine remediation program.

Motion to Draft Legislation to Create an "Office of Uranium Mining Remediation" (11:30 a.m.)

On a motion made by Representative Ferrary and seconded by Representative Sariñana, the committee voted to draft legislation to create the Office of Uranium Mining Remediation.

Compensation for Downwinders and Uranium Mine Workers (11:32 a.m.)

Tina Cordova, co-founder, Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, and Phil Harrison, senior consultant, Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee, discussed the work being done in communities affected by uranium mine sites and the Trinity nuclear test site and the need for Congress to expand and extend the health care coverage and funding provided under the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). The presentations can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=RHMC&Date=9/20/2021&ItemNumber=3>.

Motion to Send a Letter to Congress in Support of Amendment of the RECA (12:26 p.m.)

On a motion made by Representative Alcon and seconded by Representative Lord, the committee voted to send a letter to Congress in support of amending the RECA to include New Mexicans.

Public Comment (12:27 p.m.)

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

Update on the Gold King Mine Spill and Restoration Project Program (1:30 p.m.)

Ms. Roose; Maggie Hart Stebbins, natural resources trustee, Office of Natural Resources Trustee; and Marcel Gaztambide, Animas riverkeeper, San Juan Citizens Alliance, member, Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group, and member, Steering Committee, San Juan Watershed Group, provided a brief history of the Gold King Mine spill and discussed ongoing challenges, monitoring, restoration and litigation regarding the Gold King Mine and other abandoned mines in the area. The presentations can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=RHMC&Date=9/20/2021&ItemNumber=4>.

Approval of Minutes (2:39 p.m.)

On a motion made, seconded and duly passed, the minutes of the July 14, 2021 meeting were approved as submitted.

Report from the State Emergency Response Commission (2:40 p.m.)

Wendy Blackwell, bureau chief, Preparedness Bureau, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department, discussed the purpose, membership and duties of the State Emergency Response Commission and highlighted opportunities for federal funding. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/RHMC%20092021%20Item%205%20State%20Emergency%20Response%20Commission.pdf>.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m., and committee members departed for a tour of the Northeast Church Rock Mine waste pile and mill site.