

60-DAY SESSION AIMED AT ROARING BACK TO LIFE

Staff Reports

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's agenda for the first session of the 55th New Mexico Legislature announced on Jan. 13, includes the Executive Budget Recommendation for Fiscal Year 2022, and positioning for a swift and robust recovery from the pandemic to provide for sustainable progress and continued forward momentum in public education, economic development and public health and safety beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

"New Mexico will recover from this challenging year," Lujan Grisham said. "The question is what kind of future we want to make for ourselves after we put these crises behind us. We still have the power to decide what we will become. And the time to decide is this session, this year.

"We can choose to return to the same-old, or we can set ourselves up to roar back to life after the pandemic, ready to break new ground and thrive. I look forward to working closely with the Legislature in the coming weeks to achieve our shared vision of a prosperous, healthy and happy New Mexico," she concluded.

The governor's priorities for the session include helping New Mexico small businesses, supporting New Mexico consumers and boosting the state's economy.

PANDEMIC RELIEF FOR SMALL BUSINESSES:

Modifying the Small Business Recovery Act of 2020 to ensure state funding is accessible to more New Mexico small businesses. The act, approved by the Legislature in the summer 2020 special session, originally allocated $400 million in funds from the New Mexico State Severance Tax Fund to provide loans to New Mexico businesses and nonprofits that experienced financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, though not all of those funds were expended. This would supplement the $100 million in small business grants allocated in the second 2020 special session.

Providing flexibility and opportunity to restaurants and eateries by allowing alcohol delivery and reforming the state's liquor licensure program.

EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE NEW MEXICO BUSINESS-OWNERS AND KEEPING LOCAL DOLLARS LOCAL:

Reforming the state procurement code to include preference for Native-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses and promoting spending within New Mexico through set-asides for the required percentage of business contracts.

ESTABLISHING AN ESSENTIAL NEW REVENUE SOURCE FOR THE STATE AND EMPLOYMENT SOURCE FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW MEXICANS:

Legalizing adult-use recreational cannabis through legislation that protects the state's medical cannabis program, providing for workplace safety and roadway protections and enforcement and clear labeling of products.

ENSURING EVERY NEW MEXICAN HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A FULFILLING CAREER WITH THE REQUIRED EDUCATION AND SKILLS AND WITHOUT BURDENSOME DEBT:

Funding the Opportunity Scholarship at $22 million would benefit up to 30,000 students.

Budgeting $4 million for a pilot project to target four-year degree-seeking students who previously received the Lottery Scholarship and lost eligibility, but have one or two semesters left to complete their degree.

PROTECTING NEW MEXICO CONSUMERS:

Reforming predatory lending practices by limiting annual interest rates and increasing maximum loan size.

Supporting the education, health and opportunity of New Mexico children and families.

The governor will also support a proposal endorsed by the state agriculture and livestock community to create a state meat inspection program

INVESTING IN GENERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS IN EDUCATION AND WELL-BEING FOR NEW MEXICO CHILDREN:

Providing for a one percent distribution of the state’s multi-billion dollar Land Grant Permanent Fund for early childhood education, which requires voter approval.

REDUCING THE COST OF HEALTH INSURANCE AND MEDICAL EXPENSES FOR WORKING FAMILIES:

Creating a Health Care Affordability Fund that will replace a recently phased-out federal fee, expanding coverage to up to 23,000 uninsured New Mexicans in its first year and driving down premiums for tens of thousands of residents who receive coverage through the state exchange.

BOOSTING ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND COMMUNITIES:

Establishing a Family Support Index that improves the economically disadvantaged metric in the at-risk index and calculates an at-risk index for each school to provide more precise information for local funding decisions and budget oversight.

Setting an annual disparity calculation that ensures final State Equalization Guarantee payments are equalized with a per-pupil floor.

Consolidating funding, support and accountability for programs associated with addressing Yazzie-Martinez.

Ensuring reversions for public school support revert to the state support reserve fund rather than the general fund, which will keep funds intended for public education available for educational programs.

Addressing disparities within the Impact Aid funding mechanism.

ADDRESSING NEEDS OF DIFFERENTLY-ABLED NEW MEXICO STUDENTS:

Creating an ombudsman’s office dedicated to special education, which will investigate and advocate for reforms on behalf of families in the state special education system.

PROTECTING HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS:

Eliminating a provision within state law that criminalizes health care providers who perform abortion services.

Rooting out racial injustice in New Mexico.

ACKNOWLEDGING AND REDUCING INSTITUTIONAL RACISM WITHIN GOVERNMENT:

With the support of the Governor's Council for Racial Justice, enacting Sen. Linda Lopez's previous legislation that addressed equity and antiracism in hiring, retention, pay equity, accountability in government and more.

The Council for Racial Justice, which has met regularly since August, has also endorsed the proposal to pull a percentage of funding from the Land Grant Permanent Fund, among other proposals, including the establishment of a race equity director in the Governor's Office.

Promoting and maintaining the clean environment New Mexicans deserve.

CREATING A CLEAN FUEL STANDARD:

Reducing emissions from the transportation sector: In 2018, 15 percent of New Mexico's greenhouse emissions were attributed to transportation, second only to the emissions from the oil and gas industry. This reduction is achievable by focusing on the fuels. A Clean Fuel Standard reduces the carbon intensity of the fuels used in transportation. Carbon intensity is a measurement of a fuels emission profile that includes its production, shipping, and use.

A Clean Fuel Standard would apply to those who refine, blend, make or import fuel – not fuel retailers (i.e., gas stations). With a Clean Fuel Standard, transportation emissions will be reduced by 230,000 metric tons of CO_2 equivalents annually, as the clean fuel standard requires a reduction of 10 percent by 2030, and 20 percent by 2040.