

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 2

2 **57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Pete Campos

5
6
7
8
9
10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO APPOINT A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE
12 NEEDS OF FRONTIER AREAS OF THE STATE AND TO CONSIDER THE
13 EFFICACY OF THE COMMUNITY-OPERATED INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK MODEL
14 FOR THE IMPROVED DELIVERY OF NECESSARY SERVICES.

15
16 WHEREAS, the term "frontier area" means the unincorporated
17 areas of a county that are sparsely populated and isolated from
18 larger population centers and services and includes rural
19 communities; and

20 WHEREAS, recent public health research has added lack of
21 municipal status as a structural determinant of health,
22 resulting in cumulative health risks for residents due to the
23 lack of health care resources, especially for low-income
24 communities of color; and

25 WHEREAS, unincorporated communities do not have their own

.230085.2

underscoring material = new
[bracketed material] = delete

underscored material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 local officials and remain as informal settlements with
2 diminished legal power to comprehensively address local needs
3 and concerns; and

4 WHEREAS, a lack of self-governance at the local level
5 leads to political exclusion and diminished access to not just
6 health resources, but also access to clean drinking water;
7 environmentally safe disposal of wastewater; communication
8 resources, including cellular and internet service;
9 transportation; and public facilities, such as parks,
10 playgrounds, libraries and community centers, enjoyed in more
11 populated areas; and

12 WHEREAS, current infrastructure resources are outdated in
13 many rural communities and frontier areas and siloed by
14 systemic structural barriers that negatively affect the
15 provision of services while depending almost exclusively on
16 volunteer labor to deliver essential services to residents; and

17 WHEREAS, infrastructure and regulatory systems have become
18 more complex, while the volunteer pool is being reduced through
19 population loss and elderly volunteers aging out or unable to
20 perform required skills, and younger people are unavailable to
21 fill that volunteer gap because of longer commutes for school
22 and careers; and

23 WHEREAS, the community-operated infrastructure network
24 model might work well in frontier areas to increase efficiency
25 and reduce overhead costs of individual physical and social

.230085.2

underscored material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 infrastructure providers through shared services using
2 economies of scale for administrative, financial management,
3 capital improvement planning, permitting and other services
4 that could be cooperatively managed for several infrastructure
5 providers; and

6 WHEREAS, community-operated infrastructure networks could
7 help fill the personnel gaps as well as develop methodologies
8 and strategies for frontier areas to have greater autonomy over
9 local programs and services; and

10 WHEREAS, the community-operated infrastructure network
11 model promises efficiencies in the delivery of needed services
12 in frontier areas, economies of scale and trained replacements
13 for the aging volunteer system;

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
15 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the governor be requested to appoint
16 an executive-wide task force to study the needs of frontier
17 areas of the state, including members from the department of
18 finance and administration, in particular, the local government
19 division and the infrastructure planning and development
20 division; the department of environment; the office of the
21 state engineer; the department of health; the economic
22 development department; the department of information
23 technology; the Indian affairs department; the department of
24 transportation; the acequia commission; community
25 representatives of frontier areas; representatives of councils

.230085.2

underscoring material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 of state government; and any other state agencies and service
2 providers the governor deems necessary to ensure that the scope
3 and urgency of the study are addressed in a comprehensive,
4 meaningful way; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force study the needs
6 of frontier areas of the state, including:

7 A. determination of what government services are
8 currently being provided to frontier areas by locale;

9 B. determination of what infrastructures are
10 available in frontier areas by locale, and what human and other
11 resources in each area may be tapped into to improve the
12 delivery of services to and the quality of life of frontier
13 area residents; and

14 C. a review of statutes and rules and their
15 application to frontier areas and what can be amended, repealed
16 or enacted to assist frontier areas in the provision of
17 infrastructure and in the establishment of community-operated
18 infrastructure networks, including what resources can be
19 provided by the state; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study assess methodologies
21 for strengthening frontier areas with financial investment and
22 other resources; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include potential
24 incentives for frontier areas willing to establish community-
25 operated infrastructure networks to increase efficiency and

.230085.2

underscoring material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 reduce overhead costs of individual infrastructure providers
2 through shared services and consider how the state, councils of
3 government and counties can provide funding to replace
4 volunteers with centralized paid staff who possess the training
5 and skills needed to operate modern infrastructure; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force provide
7 periodic reports of its work to the legislative interim
8 committees concerned with rural economic development and other
9 rural concerns and a final report to the governor and the
10 legislature, with findings and recommendations, by November 1,
11 2025; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
13 transmitted to the governor, the department of finance and
14 administration, the New Mexico acequia association, the New
15 Mexico rural library initiative and the New Mexico rural water
16 association.