



**Aubrey Dunn, State Land Commissioner  
State of New Mexico**

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Emily Strickler, Assistant Commissioner for Communications

(505) 827-3650 - office

(505) 470-8829 - mobile

[estrickler@slo.state.nm.us](mailto:estrickler@slo.state.nm.us)

**New Mexico Tech to Assess the Value Federal Minerals That Could Support Early Childhood Education**

**Santa Fe, NM (December 19 , 2016)** – The New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (New Mexico Tech) will assess the value of approximately 6.6 million acres of unleased federal mineral estate in New Mexico that could potentially support early childhood education, according to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved by New Mexico State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn.

The MOU is part of the commissioner’s due diligence process to determine the feasibility of assuming ownership and management of the unleased federal split estate minerals. The surface estate is privately-owned.

Members of New Mexico’s congressional delegation are spearheading the effort to transfer the federal mineral estate to the state.

“New Mexico doesn’t have the resources to implement early childhood education programs,” said Commissioner Dunn. “The revenue earned by leasing these minerals could potentially provide hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in our kids.”

The “Early Childhood Education Land Grant Act,” which Commissioner Dunn is pitching to the Legislature, would create the Early Childhood Education Land Grant Permanent Fund and the Early Childhood Education Land Grant Income Fund. Revenue earned from the federal mineral estate would be paid into the Early Childhood Education Land Grant Permanent Fund, however, the federal government would receive 50 percent of the revenue earned for the first 10 years.

Annual distributions equal to the interest, dividends and capital gains of the Early Childhood Education Permanent Fund would then be transferred to the Early Childhood Education Land Grant Income Fund. Ninety-five percent of the Income Fund would be appropriated annually by the Legislature for early

childhood education programs as provided by law. The remaining five percent would be appropriated to the State Land Office to cover costs incurred from managing the minerals.

New Mexico Tech is expected to deliver its final report by March 15, 2017.

The university is one of 22 beneficiaries that receive income from the Trust that Commissioner Dunn and the State Land Office manage. Since Commissioner Dunn took office in 2015, New Mexico Tech has earned \$3,256,548 from Land Grant Permanent Fund and Land Maintenance Fund distributions to augment its operating budget.

Revenues earned from non-renewable resources, such as oil, gas, and mineral royalties and land sale proceeds, are paid into the Land Grant Permanent Fund. The State Investment Council invests the corpus of the fund and the beneficiaries are paid 5.5 percent of the five year average market value of the fund.

Revenues earned from renewable resources, such as lease payments, rights-of-way, and interest, are paid into the Land Maintenance Fund, 26 percent of which covers State Land Office operating expenses, while 74 percent is distributed to the beneficiaries.

Commissioner Dunn and the State Land Office manage 9 million acres of surface estate and 13 million mineral acres held in trust to support public schools, seven universities, three hospitals, correctional facilities and other programs and services.

###