



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

For Immediate Release

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**\*\*Media Advisory\*\***

**Land Exchange Closing Between the State Land Office and the Navajo Nation**

**Albuquerque, NM** – For nearly three decades, the New Mexico State Land Office and the Navajo Nation have attempted to exchange State Trust Lands checkerboarded within the Navajo Nation’s hundreds of thousands of acres across the state. Previous administrations attempted to exchange lands with the Navajo Nation, but plans were never completed. It was not until Commissioner Dunn’s administration that discussions resulted in an exchange. The exchange will remedy the inadvertent placement of Navajo dwellings, and two Navajo cemeteries on State Trust Lands.

The exchange provides multiple benefits for both parties and the State Trust Land Beneficiaries:

- The lands being conveyed to the Navajo Nation are of both historical and cultural significance to the Navajo Nation;
- The exchange will consolidate checkerboard lands thereby facilitating land management for both the State Land Office and the Navajo Nation;
- The Navajo people using State Trust Lands will be able to finally obtain much needed rights-of-ways for basic life-sustaining services such as water, electricity & gas;
- The lands acquired by the State will generate significantly more in revenues for the Beneficiaries of the State Trust Lands, the majority of which will benefit the public schools of New Mexico.
- The lands being conveyed to New Mexico will be leased by the Navajo Nation for continued use.

The Land Office is conveying 45,562 ± acres of State Trust Lands in Cibola , McKinley & San Juan Counties (Appraisal Value \$15,020,597), in exchange for the Navajo Nation conveying 41,803 ± acres of land in Cibola & Socorro Counties (Appraisal Value \$15,010,000 – Navajo Nation will pay the difference in value at closing to SLO).

Remarks will be given by New Mexico State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn and Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye.

**What:** Land Exchange Closing

**When:** Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup> 2:00 pm

**Where:** New Mexico State Land Office (ABQ)  
800 Bradbury SE Suite 203  
Albuquerque, NM 87106