



Stephanie Garcia Richard, Land Commissioner
State of New Mexico

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**State Land Office to Hold Public Meeting
Regarding Proposed Changes to Agricultural
Leases**

Effort Aimed at Streamlining Leasing Process

SANTA FE, NM – The New Mexico State Land Office (SLO) will hold a public hearing on Friday, May 24, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. in Morgan Hall at the Land Office in Santa Fe located at 310 Old Santa Fe Trail.

The hearing is taking place to receive public comments on proposed amendments to the SLO rules governing State Land Office agricultural leases, overseen by Commissioner of Public Lands Stephanie Garcia Richard. The current rules are located in Part 8 of Chapter 2 of Title 19 of the New Mexico Administrative Code (19.2.8 NMAC).

The proposed changes modify the requirements for applications to renew an agricultural lease, eliminating the requirement that applicants provide a burdensome and antiquated appraisal form that is meant to capture the value of the land. Rather than requiring an appraisal, SLO will look to existing formulas to determine agricultural land value and rental fees.

In addition, the proposed changes would allow applicants the opportunity to seek a re-evaluation of the carrying capacity for grazing land. The Land Office considers carrying capacity, the number of livestock that can be sustained on a specific segment or parcel of land, in the formula that determines the annual rent that agricultural lessees pay to the SLO.

“Since taking office, I have been listening to the concerns of everyone that leases state trust land and looking for ways to make our processes easier and more streamlined for applicants. Hundreds of hard working farmers and ranchers lease our land for livestock grazing,” Commissioner Garcia Richard said of the rule change.

“Agriculture accounts for our largest geographical business operation at the Land Office; we lease approximately 8.8 million acres of state trust land for grazing. I am constitutionally obligated to steward the land while raising money for New Mexico public schools, hospitals, and colleges. Money from agricultural leases allow us to save New Mexico taxpayers an average of \$1,000 a year. I am dedicated to being a good partner to our lessees and this rule change is a small part of that commitment,” Commissioner Garcia Richard added.

The SLO Office of General Counsel will preside over the meeting, which is open to the public and press. Notice of the public meeting has been made available on the SLO website, the New Mexico Sunshine Portal, as well as in person at the State Land Office and district field offices.

Details

What: State Land Office public meeting regarding proposed changes to State Land Office Rule 19.2.8 NMAC.

When: Friday, May 24th, 2019 10:00 a.m. until concluded.

Where: Morgan Hall, New Mexico State Land Office, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Oil, gas, and mineral production, ranching and farming, and commercial development on State Trust Lands support public schools, seven universities, New Mexico Military Institute, New Mexico School for the Deaf, New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, three hospitals, correctional facilities, water conservation projects, and public building construction and repair. In fiscal year 2018, the State Land Office collected \$852 million from lease payments, oil and gas lease sale earnings, rights-of-way, permits, interest, fees, and oil, gas, and mineral royalties.