



Michelle Lujan Grisham • Governor
Alicia J. Keyes • Cabinet Secretary

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New Mexico moves to boost Outdoor Recreation Industry

Santa Fe, N.M. – A bi-partisan effort to boost New Mexico’s outdoor recreation industry with hundreds of new jobs is making its way through the Legislature.

The measure that creates the New Mexico Division of Outdoor Recreation gained unanimous approval in the New Mexico Senate on March 11, passing 38 to 0. The bill now moves to the state House of Representatives.

Sen. Jeff Steinborn, a Las Cruces Democrat and one of four sponsors, said the new initiative would spur economic opportunities throughout the state and create a specific mandate for the New Mexico Economic Development Department to work with businesses that cater to outdoor enthusiasts from hikers and hunters to kayakers, skiers, birders and cyclers.

“This is an economic initiative on the part of this Governor,” Steinborn said of the measure that is moving with the support of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, adding that the bill feels like “we are doing something really significant.”

“New Mexico has the greatest outdoor opportunities in the West, and creating a focused office will attract new businesses and boost existing opportunities across the state,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “When we create a focused office to both attract new businesses and boost existing concerns, we will plant our flag alongside Colorado, Montana, Utah and others. And indeed we have the potential to surpass them.”

Republican Sen. William Payne said if New Mexico steps up its efforts it can be “a real money generator for the state.”

The bill puts the new responsibilities under the state Economic Development Department, which works with businesses throughout the state to expand capacity, better serve customers, and train employees.

Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes, said New Mexico is blessed with a rich array of national parks and monuments as well as state parks, lakes, rivers as well as privately owned hunting lands and tribal recreation areas.

“This is another opportunity to diversify our economy and add jobs in an economic sector that is growing and sustainable,” said Keyes.

The bill creates a new director of outdoor recreation as well as a recreation advisory committee with representatives from several agencies including the Game and Fish Department. It also funds a new grant

program for recreational projects and infrastructure and targets money toward community-based recreation marketing and promotion.

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