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HOUSE BILL 16

**55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2021**

INTRODUCED BY

Roger Montoya

AN ACT

RELATING TO THE LEGISLATURE; CREATING THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY  
COMMITTEE; ESTABLISHING MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES; REQUIRING  
REPORTS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. TEMPORARY PROVISION--RURAL OPPORTUNITY  
COMMITTEE--CREATED--TERMINATION.--There is created a joint  
interim legislative committee that shall be known as the "rural  
opportunity committee". The committee shall function from the  
date of its appointment until the first day of December prior  
to the first session of the fifty-sixth legislature.

SECTION 2. TEMPORARY PROVISION--MEMBERSHIP--  
APPOINTMENTS.--

A. The rural opportunity committee shall be  
composed of fourteen members. Eight members of the house of

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1 representatives shall be appointed by the speaker of the house  
2 of representatives, and six members of the senate shall be  
3 appointed by the committees' committee of the senate or, if the  
4 senate appointments are made in the interim, by the president  
5 pro tempore of the senate after consultation with and agreement  
6 of a majority of the members of the committees' committee.

7 B. Members shall be appointed from each house so as  
8 to give:

9 (1) the two major political parties in each  
10 house the same proportional representation on the committee as  
11 prevails in each house; however, in no event shall either party  
12 have less than one member from each house on the committee; and

13 (2) representation to the membership of each  
14 of the following interim committees, to be made in consultation  
15 with the appropriate chair of that committee to ensure  
16 accountability:

17 (a) the legislative finance committee;

18 (b) the legislative education study

19 committee;

20 (c) the legislative health and human

21 services committee;

22 (d) the revenue stabilization and tax

23 policy committee;

24 (e) the New Mexico finance authority

25 oversight committee; and

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1 (f) the appropriate interim committees  
2 or subcommittees that deal with: 1) water and natural  
3 resources; 2) rural and economic development; 3) Indian  
4 affairs; 4) land grants; 5) science, technology and  
5 telecommunications; and 6) transportation infrastructure.

6 C. Vacancies on the committee shall be filled by  
7 appointment in the same manner as the original appointments.  
8 At the request of the committee chair, members may be removed  
9 from the committee by the New Mexico legislative council for  
10 nonattendance according to council policy. For the interim  
11 occurring during the 2021 calendar year, the speaker of the  
12 house of representatives shall appoint the chair of the  
13 committee, and the president pro tempore of the senate shall  
14 appoint the vice chair of the committee. For the interim  
15 occurring during the 2022 calendar year, the president pro  
16 tempore of the senate shall appoint the chair of the committee,  
17 and the speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint  
18 the vice chair of the committee.

19 D. No action shall be taken by the committee if a  
20 majority of the total membership from either house on the  
21 committee rejects such action.

22 SECTION 3. TEMPORARY PROVISION--DUTIES.--After its  
23 appointment, the rural opportunity committee shall hold one  
24 organizational meeting to develop a work plan and budget for  
25 the ensuing interim. The work plan and budget shall be

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1 submitted to the New Mexico legislative council for approval.  
2 Upon approval of the work plan and budget by the legislative  
3 council, the committee shall:

4 A. review issues affecting rural areas of the  
5 state;

6 B. identify barriers to economic and educational  
7 opportunities in rural areas of the state and propose policies  
8 to reduce or eliminate those barriers;

9 C. assess all potential funding sources and  
10 opportunities for investment in infrastructure, economic  
11 development, education and health care in rural areas of the  
12 state;

13 D. develop a long-term plan to address rural needs,  
14 including the development of a rural relief legislative  
15 proposal that leverages bonding capacity, capital outlay  
16 funding and general fund appropriations, to provide for rural  
17 economic development;

18 E. review current tax policy, including credits,  
19 rebates and deductions, to ensure equity between urban and  
20 rural communities;

21 F. coordinate with the office of the governor to  
22 develop proposals;

23 G. coordinate and meet concurrently, whenever  
24 practicable, with other legislative interim committees that  
25 address similar issues;

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1 H. propose legislation to maximize public and  
2 private investments in rural communities and to foster the  
3 health and well-being of all residents of rural areas of the  
4 state; and

5 I. develop a legislative proposal to ensure access  
6 for every New Mexican to running water, wastewater treatment  
7 services, electricity and broadband internet that provides  
8 benchmarks and tracks yearly progress.

9 SECTION 4. TEMPORARY PROVISION--REPORT.--The committee  
10 shall make a report of its findings and recommendations for the  
11 consideration of each session of the legislature. The report  
12 and suggested legislation shall be made available to the New  
13 Mexico legislative council on or before December 15 preceding  
14 each session.

15 SECTION 5. TEMPORARY PROVISION--STAFF.--The staff for the  
16 rural opportunity committee shall be provided by the  
17 legislative council service.

18 SECTION 6. EMERGENCY.--It is necessary for the public  
19 peace, health and safety that this act take effect immediately.