NEW MEXICO Food & Agriculture POLICY COUNCIL

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2026 New Mexico Legislature Policy Priorities

as of January 19, 2026

- **Regional Farm to Food Bank Program (HB101) – $2,000,000** to continue New Mexico's highly successful **Farm to Food Bank Program** for New Mexico.

This is a priority of the Office of the Governor, the NM Department of Agriculture and is in House Appropriations Committee FY27 Recommendations.
Bill sponsors: Representative Joanne Ferrary and Senator Liz Stefanics

Between FY23–FY25, The Food Depot purchased $4,640,000 in food from New Mexico farmers and ranchers at market rate. New Mexico must act now to sustain these **vital investments in small - and mid-scale agriculture, hunger relief, and community health.**

- **Approved Supplier Program – $430,000** (recurring request)

Increasing demands for New Mexico agricultural products have necessitate a larger investment in the New Mexico Grown Approved Supplier Program. The program helps assure fresh produce that moves through schools, early childhood facilities, and senior centers, is safe, traceable, and originates from a garden or farm using sound and current food safety practices.
This is a priority of the Office of the Governor, NM Department of Agriculture (NMDA), and is in the Legislative Finance Committee's FY27 Recommendations.



- **New Mexico Grown Program for Seniors – $1,500,000** for senior center meal program to purchase NM grown and raised food from farmers and ranchers.

Requesting funds for the Aging & Long-Term Services (ALTSD) Kiki Saavedra Senior Dignity Fund, which supports programs that enhance the quality of life and independence of older adults.

- **Healthy Universal School Meals**

Now in its second full year, Healthy Universal School Meals is serving more students than ever, with 56,139,940 meals provided to children across New Mexico. Maintaining this success and to ensure every student has access to nutritious food.

The Office of the Governor recommends $42.2 million in recurring funding for FY27. Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) additionally recommends $5.1793 million contingent on a budgetary shortfall in FY27 due to growth in participation of meals rates.

- **Healthy Food Financing Fund – $2, 000,000** Economic Development Department (EDD).

This is a grant program and a suite of financial tools and technical assistance for food and agricultural enterprises who grow, raise, process, aggregate, distribute, and sell/or local, fresh, healthy food through expanded retail and institutional in-state market channels in rural and underserved communities.
This is a priority of the Office of the Governor, NM Economic Development Department (NMEDD), and is in the Legislative Finance Committee's FY27 Recommendations.

- **WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs – $1,000,000** to expand the distribution of food boxes with New Mexico grown into rural and underserved communities that do not have farmers' markets (DOH).
This is a priority of the Department of Health.

- **Agriculture Water Resilience Program - $10 million** for FY 2027, initiated in 2025 providing grants to farmers for water efficient projects. More than 40 farmers received grants for a wide variety of projects that will decrease water use on crops. NM State University Water Resources Research Institute (WRRI).
This is a priority of Office of the Governor.

- **New Mexicans Feeding New Mexicans: Nutrition Supports at Farmers' Markets – $1,000,000**
Introduction by the NM Farmers' Marketing Association

Supporting New Mexico's ranchers and farmers, nutrition access and food security. As the federal landscape adds great uncertainty to existing nutrition access programs such as Double Up Food Bucks, this appropriation will ensure that low- income New Mexicans can continue to access fresh, nutritious food while supporting local agricultural producers. This statewide program will serve families who face food insecurity by providing access to meat, nuts, eggs, produce, and other nutritious foods at farmers' markets across the state. The program will be responsive to federal actions and will directly support the SNAP Double Up Food Bucks program as needed.
Sponsors: Representatives Rebecca Dow and Tara Lujan

- **New Mexico Food Recovery, Organic Waste Reduction and Composting Act**
Introduction by the NM Healthy Soil Working Group
Sponsor: Pete Campos and the Office of the Governor



Relating to regenerative waste management, introducing a state surcharge on solid waste disposal, creating a fund and establishing a working group to develop a grant program and other strategies to advance food recovery, organic waste reduction and composting throughout New Mexico.

- **Update New Mexico's Land Conservation Incentives Act for our Land, Water, Economy & Culture**

The Problem:

- The Land Conservation Incentives Act (LCIA) has not been updated since 2008.
- New Mexico's land values have skyrocketed as development has transformed rural areas and threatened water supplies.
- The LCIA's tax credits are capped at 50% of conservation value, and $250k total, which isn't enough to incentivize protection of our most threatened landscapes.
- These caps are especially problematic for land rich/cash poor New Mexicans and those with senior water rights.

The Solution:

- It's simple: update the caps.
- Increasing the amount of conservation value for which landowners can be compensated to 80% will allow

more small-scale landowners and farmers to keep New Mexico's land heritage alive.

- Boosting the cap on each transaction to $2M will allow for more landscape-scale projects that protect watersheds & wildlife.
- This approach is modeled on that of Colorado's conservation easement tax credit, which has been wildly successful in increasing the pace of conservation.



NM Acequias and Soil & Water Conservation Districts Programs
Programs and resources that benefit farmers and ranchers including soil and water conservation and acequia infrastructure projects, water resilient resources for farmers and ranchers, and other support programs such as but not limited to:

- Funds to provide to Soil & Water Districts trainings
- River stewardship funding
- A Memorial on water restoration programs
- Land Grant-Merced Acequia Infrastructure Act (HB21) sponsored by Representative Miguel Garcia and led by the New Mexico Acequia Association

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