



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Announces Major Funding Increase For State Crime Lab

Governor calls for new hires, 10 percent raises, temporary lab addition

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today said he will propose a \$751,000 funding increase for the State Crime Lab to hire eight new technicians and increase scientist salaries by 10 percent in an effort to reduce the backlog of crime analysis.

Governor Richardson will also ask the State Board of Finance to fund a \$500,000 emergency loan to the Department of Public Safety for a temporary, portable crime lab addition that will be used by lab employees for administrative duties. The temporary addition will free up space in the existing crime lab for more analytical work.

“The hard-working people who staff the state crime lab have done the best that they can, under difficult circumstances,” Governor Richardson said. “I know it is difficult to recruit and retain the best DNA analysts, the best chemists, and the best ballistics experts. And I know there is a need for a new crime lab to relieve the stress on this facility.

“Today, I am announcing a funding package that will allow us to start to address these issues.”

The Governor’s plan for the crime lab includes:

1. \$536,000 to pay for eight new positions at the crime lab. The money will be recurring, which enables the lab to permanently fill the positions and address the staffing shortage that has helped create a backlog in evidence analysis.

2. \$215,000 to pay for a 10-percent pay increase for scientists at the lab. This will help the lab recruit and retain qualified scientists to do this important work.

Governor Richardson supports allowing the Department of Public Safety continue to use the contractual money currently in the budget to provide flexibility to utilize other labs for DNA analysis.

3. \$500,000 emergency loan from the State Board of Finance t to pay for a temporary, portable building for the Crime Lab staff to use for administrative work. This will free up space in the existing lab to be used for analytical work, not paperwork.

“The long-term solution is a new crime lab, which will cost as much as \$35-million dollars,” Governor Richardson said. “We are moving forward with the design work for the new lab, and we will work with the Legislature to fund it. But I wanted to provide help now to help tackle the backlog of cases that currently exists.

“I am proud of the progress we have made in fighting crime -- preventing DWI, cracking down on meth and putting more sex offenders in prison. But we must ensure that law enforcement and the prosecutors have the proper tools to follow through and secure a conviction.”

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