



For immediate release
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Governor Bill Richardson Puts DOT Negotiations on Hold During Investigations

SANTA FE -- Governor Bill Richardson today announced that the state Department of Transportation, after discussions with the developer of the department's headquarters redevelopment project, will put negotiations on hold while two separate investigations initiated by the Governor are conducted.

The Governor has also directed the Transportation Department to work with the developer, as well as another developer that bid on the headquarters project, to come to an agreement on releasing as many documents as possible about the project without divulging confidential or proprietary information.

"While I believe this is a worthy project that can and should move forward in the future, it is prudent to put negotiations on hold while we take an in-depth look at every facet of it," Governor Richardson said. "I don't want this project to be tainted in any way. If it moves forward, taxpayers should be confident that they are getting the best deal possible."

Governor Richardson earlier this week expanded a probe by the Transportation Department's Inspector General into contract processes for the headquarters redevelopment project. The Inspector General will also look at the District 5 relocation project, and assess if there are any financial, accounting, or internal control vulnerabilities that may exist in DOT's system for handling complex procurements of this nature.

The Governor is also in the process of hiring outside counsel to conduct a separate, independent review of DOT's handling of both projects. The counsel shall report directly to the Governor at the conclusion of its review.

Governor Richardson reiterated that taxpayer money has been safeguarded during the early stages of both the headquarters redevelopment project and the District 5 relocation project.

"I don't want the state to sign any contract until we know we can trust that taxpayers are protected," Governor Richardson said.

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