



State of New Mexico

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
MARCH 10 2026

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

March 9, 2026

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 92

The Honorable Javier Martínez, Speaker of the House and
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Honorable Speaker Martínez and Members of the House:

Pursuant to my authority under Article IV, Section 22 of the New Mexico Constitution, I have signed HOUSE ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL 80 (“HB 80”), enacted by the Fifty-Seventh Legislature, Second Session, 2026. I must note, however, that New Mexico faces significant and growing financial liabilities for oil and gas well cleanup. While most wells are plugged by operators, the Oil Conservation Division (“OCD”) of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department must intervene when wells are left inactive and unplugged without authorization. OCD currently has plugging authority for roughly 700 wells on state and private lands, and the State may need to assume responsibility for an additional 1,400 inactive wells. More than 3,000 additional wells are at risk of becoming orphaned. In total, the Legislative Finance Committee estimates New Mexico’s current and anticipated liability for well plugging and site remediation between \$700 million and \$1.6 billion.

While this bill would make significant strides towards putting public money aside for that forecasted liability by increasing the percentage of the revenue from the Oil Conservation Tax towards a non-reverting reclamation fund, I want to make abundantly clear that the work of plugging orphaned wells *cannot wait* until the phased-in distributions begin. I expect well owners (including those in the Legislature) to fulfill their responsibility in managing their assets as well as avoiding any potential conflicts of interest with businesses related to well plugging or environmental remediation.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Lujan Grisham".

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

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Time: 5:53 a.m. p.m. For
Date: March 9th 2026 By [Signature]
Secretary of State

Time: 8:07 a.m. p.m.
Date: 3/10 2026 By [Signature]
Chief Clerk of the House