

STAFF REPORTS

NEW MEXICO GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, Mike Miller, PBPA

The dust has settled from the 2022 election and the landscape looks almost the same as it did prior to November 8th. Governor Lujan Grisham was re-elected for another 4-year term and the numbers in the New Mexico House remain the same (45 Democrats and 25 Republicans).

There will be some changes in the House as both caucuses have selected new leadership. The Democratic caucus will nominate Jaiver Martinez to serve as Speaker of the House (Speaker Egolf did not seek re-election). They chose Gail Chasey of Albuquerque to serve as Majority Floor Leader, Reena Szczepanski (newly elected) of Santa Fe to serve as Minority whip and Ray Lara of Las Cruces to be caucus chair.

The Republican caucus also chose new leadership: T. Ryan Lane of Aztec will serve as Minority Floor Leader; Jason Harper of Rio Rancho was elected Minority Whip; and, Gail Armstrong of Magdalena will serve as caucus chair. Along with the new leadership, there will be 17 new members in the House. Where these and other Representatives will serve during session, however, won't be known until House committees are appointed after the Speaker is officially elected on opening day.

While the Senate was not up for election this cycle, Senator Joseph Candelaria (Albuquerque) resigned his seat during the interim. The Bernalillo County Commission has appointed Rep. Moe Maestas to serve out the remainder of that term.

What are we expecting when the New Mexico Session convenes on January 17th? From the fiscal aspect, (because of this industry) there is over 2 billion dollars in new recurring money. This has led to discussions on some form of tax reform as well as bolstering reserves. Interim committees, where some of these discussions have occurred, will be wrapping up their work in the coming weeks and providing endorsed legislation before doing so.

While pre-filing of legislation does not begin until January 3 we expect to see several pieces of legislation from last session including: the Green Amendment; the Clean Futures Act; Clean Fuel Standards; and, most likely an anti-fracking bill. We have heard that the New Mexico Environment Department and Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department may not be as heavily involved in these bills as last session. It has also been announced that current Director of the Oil Conservation Division, Adrienne Sandoval, is stepping down from that position at the end of 2022 to take a position with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This change will likely impact the engagement of the OCD during the upcoming session.

The PBPA NM Legislative Committee held its first meeting on Nov. 30th and plans to meet every Wednesday during the session. We will be providing regular updates regarding legislation impacting industry.