

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
Todd E. Leahy, JD, PhD, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Louise Martinez, Energy Conservation and Management Division Director



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Ahead of Earth Day, EMNRD launches Climate Policy Bureau

New unit will coordinate efforts toward building a sustainable future for all New Mexicans

SANTA FE, NM – Just ahead of Earth Day, the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) announces the launch of its new Climate Policy Bureau.

This new bureau is a part of EMNRD's Energy Conservation Management Division (ECMD). It will play an integral role in building New Mexico's capacity to adapt to climate change by supporting interagency efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, grow the state's green economy and develop and implement a statewide Climate Action Plan.

"Adding a Climate Policy Bureau formalizes and elevates our agency's laser focus on addressing climate change in New Mexico," said EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. "This group of experts will focus on strategies to reduce emissions and increase resilience across the state, while also supporting the governor's interagency Climate Change Task Force," said EMNRD Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst.

Along with launching the new bureau, ECMD recently hired Rachel Finkelstein to serve as Climate Policy Bureau Chief. Finkelstein comes to EMNRD from the New York City Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, where she was a Senior Policy Advisor.

"I am thrilled to take on this critically important task of helping to steer New Mexico's action on climate change," Finkelstein said. "Many people across the state already are doing outstanding work in that regard. I hope I can help in moving those efforts forward with a focus on climate justice."

The Climate Policy Bureau's work will include:

- Supporting state agency efforts to comply with Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham's Executive Order 2019-003 on Climate Change and Energy Waste Prevention, which directs all state agencies to evaluate the impacts of climate change on their programs and operations and integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation practices into their programs and operations.
- Developing plans for how the state uses federal funds and other grants to make New Mexico Communities more resilient to climate hazards. That will include administering the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. ECMD received funding from this program—via the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—to develop projects to increase state agencies' climate resilience and develop a statewide Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan. Other program objectives include developing tools to communicate climate science information and provide outreach and education to increase climate literacy and technical assistance for local and tribal governments and stakeholders in all New Mexico counties.
- Improving New Mexico's Climate Risk Map. ECMD launched the [New Mexico Climate Risk Map](#) web application in 2021. This free online resource helps New Mexicans understand place-based risks from natural hazards exacerbated by changing climate conditions, such as increasing heat, aridity, or wildfire. It also helps users to visualize and understand hazards and risks and can help decision makers allocate resources to address climate hazards.

ECMD is currently updating the Climate Risk Map and welcomes input on how to make the tool more useful for individual communities. Comments and suggestions for the map can be sent to EMNRDClimateAction@state.nm.us.

“As we approach another Earth Day, we are pleased to be making progress in our ongoing efforts to fight climate change,” said ECMD Director Louise Martinez. “Launching the Climate Policy Bureau is a major milestone in those efforts. However, we also look forward to the Climate Risk Map update, and really hope members of the public will provide input into that process.”

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