

Governor Signs Landmark Energy Legislation, Establishing New Mexico As A National Leader In Renewable Transition Efforts

Mar 22, 2019

Surrounded by dozens of advocates and statewide leaders, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Friday signed Senate Bill 489, the Energy Transition Act, landmark legislation that sets bold statewide renewable energy standards and establishes a pathway for a low-carbon energy transition away from coal while providing workforce training and transition assistance to affected communities.

Developed over the course of a year with collaboration by community organizations, unions, energy groups and advocates, the Energy Transition Act establishes New Mexico as a national leader in clean energy. The ETA sets a statewide renewable energy standard of 50 percent by 2030 for New Mexico investor-owned utilities and rural electric cooperatives and a goal of 80 percent by 2040, in addition to setting zero-carbon resources standards for investor-owned utilities by 2045 and rural electric cooperatives by 2050. The law transitions New Mexico away from coal and toward clean energy, ensuring greater renewable energy production and reducing costs for consumers, and provides tens of millions of dollars of economic and workforce support for communities impacted by coal plant closures, as well as the development of renewable replacement power in San Juan County.

“This is a really big deal,” Gov. Lujan Grisham said. “In every corner of this state, advocates, utilities, young adults, unions, elected officials and families came together to push for and, today, enact this transformational law. The Energy Transition Act fundamentally changes the dynamic in New Mexico. This legislation is a promise to future generations of New Mexicans, who will benefit from both a cleaner environment and a more robust energy economy with exciting career and job opportunities. Crucially, the Energy Transition Act does not leave affected workers and neighbors behind. We look out for each other. With this law, we seal that promise.”

“The ETA cements New Mexico’s place as a national leader in the transition to a new, renewable energy economy,” said sponsor Sen. Jacob Candelaria. “Unlike other states, the bill doesn’t leave our neighbors that have relied on the coal industry behind. The bill will drive hundreds of millions of dollars investments in workers and communities to ensure a just transition to our state’s renewable energy future.”

“This is a first, fundamental and huge step forward,” said sponsor Rep. Nathan Small. “We have always had the potential. Tomorrow, New Mexicans will wake up in a state that finally decided to lead, tackle renewable energy and create jobs in our communities. As the governor said, with this legislation, we leave no New Mexican behind.”

“The governor’s leadership has been admirable, and it’s worth highlighting as we mark this historic day for New Mexico,” said sponsor Sen. Mimi Stewart. “We wouldn’t have been able to achieve these ambitious new standards without her, and I applaud both her and all of the stakeholders across the state who contributed to this tremendous effort. New Mexico is moving forward on clean energy.”

“This legislation is a milestone for not just the state of New Mexico and the southwest, but all of the U.S., including tribal communities,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez. “I applaud the governor, lawmakers, and cabinet secretaries for their work. This is a gift for our children and children of New Mexico who are yet to be born. Clean energy is the future of our nation.”

“New Mexico’s Energy Transition Act is the strongest package of its kind in the country,” said Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “The renewable and zero-carbon standards, apprenticeship opportunities, securitization tool for retiring uneconomic coal plants, and state programmatic and financial assistance for the affected community are unparalleled.”