

# NEW MEXICO *Petroleum Marketers Association Report*



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*As the leaves are changing and winter approaching* in New Mexico our political landscape seems to be on a merry-go-round of changes. With the resignation over the past few months from some of New Mexico’s senior legislators there is a lot of strategy developing to win those seats. There will be a lot of shuffling from House members running for open or resigned seats in the Senate.

## New Mexico

### Senior State Senators resign:

**Effective October 25th** Senator Stuart Ingle, R-Portales, representing five counties in District 27, Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Lea and Roosevelt, resigned. He had served since 1985. Ingle was the former Minority Leader in the Senate.

Effective August 1st, Senator Gay Kernan resigned from the New Mexico Senate. Senator Kernan had been in the Senate since 2002 and represented district 42.

Senator Cliff Pirtle, representing district 32, will not seek re-election. Senator Pirtle has been in the Senate since 2013.

We understand there will be other legislators either resigning or not seeking re-election before the 2024 filing deadline.

### News Around New Mexico:

**Company Eyes Southwest NM for Lithium Production:** Southwest New Mexico’s Playa Lakes could play a key role in the energy transition as a key source of lithium. Lancaster Resources, a company based in Canada, is hoping to cash in on that opportunity and has acquired the Alkali Flat Lithium Brine Project located in Hidalgo County near Lordsburg.

In September, the company submitted applications to the state’s Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management for a permit to drill these wells.

**New Mexico Loses a Senior Statesman:** Former Governor, Congressman and Ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, died in his sleep on September 1st at his home in Massachusetts at the age of 75. He was the 30th Governor of NM.

**Exxon Mobil to Purchase Pioneer, Expanding in the Permian Basin:** Exxon Mobil will purchase Pioneer Natural Resources in an all-stock deal valued at \$59.5 billion, its largest buyout since

acquiring Mobil two decades ago. This will create a colossal fracking operator in the Permian Basin.

*“As the world looks to transition and find lower sources of affordable energy with lower emissions, fossil fuels oil and gas are going to continue to play a roll over time,”* Exxon Mobil CEO Darren Woods said during an interview with CNBC. *“That may diminish with time. The rate of that is ... not very clear at this stage. But it will be around for a long time.”*

Woods explained that Exxon and Pioneer will be able to use their combined capabilities to drive down emissions and produce lower carbon intensity oil and gas.

**New Mexico State’s Fleet to be 100% electric by 2035:** Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham said all state government agencies will move their fleets to “100% electric” by 2035 through an executive order. She also said her office plans to promote legislation next session aimed at offering robust electric vehicle tax credits in the state.

*“We have to think about ways to create opportunities for the folks selling those vehicles, whether that’s a dealer or an individual. And we have to think about ways to make sure that individuals have access to that marketplace, but also that they’ve got opportunities to do the charging right at their own homes; those things have to all be connected.”*

**New Mexico Left out of Hydrogen Hub Funding:** The White House announced \$7 billion in funding for seven regional “hydrogen hubs” across the nation, none of which include New Mexico or the other three Rocky Mountain States that jointly competed for grant awards.

New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Utah, which formed the Western Inter-State Hydrogen Hub, or WISHH coalition, last year had jointly applied for \$1.25 billion in federal awards to help finance eight different hydrogen projects in the region, including four in New Mexico.

The U.S. Department of Energy is administrating a total of \$8 billion in funding for hydrogen-hub development projects, which was included in the federal Infrastructure Act approved in 2021.

**Protesters Gathered Outside of Energy Conference,** New Mexico’s first-ever comprehensive conference on “Building an Advanced Energy Ecosystem in New Mexico.” It brought together scientists, researchers, and energy industry rep-

representatives from across the state to discuss effective ways to decarbonize New Mexico.

The protest, organized by Youth United for Climate Crisis Action, or YUCCA, showed stark differences between many local environment groups and conference organizers, with radically different philosophies on how to reduce the state's carbon emissions.

**Legal Decision on Avangrid Merger Still Pending:**

The New Mexico Supreme Court said it will continue reviewing a Public Regulation Commission decision to reject the Public Service Co. of New Mexico and energy giant Avangrid's proposed merger after listening to oral arguments.

The five court justices could have immediately ruled in a bench order on whether to uphold the PRC's December 2021 rejection of the merger, or instead remand the case back to the PRC for reconsideration. But the court said it will consider the evidence presented in oral arguments before reaching a final decision.

**Governor Announces Firearms Ban:** September 9, 2023

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham said she will enact a month-long ban on carrying firearms-concealed or openly-in any public space in Bernalillo County and any state property in NM.

The ban, which Lujan Grisham acknowledged most likely faced legal challenges and was meant to push for change, was one part of a sweeping executive order. *"The purpose is to try to create a cooling off period while we figure out how we can better address public safety and gun violence."*

The executive order also included monthly inspections of licensed gun dealers for violations, testing waste water at schools for drugs like fentanyl, allowing police to book juveniles into jail without Social Services' permission, and sending New Mexico State Police officers to help fight crime in Albuquerque and Bernalillo county.

**Flurry of Lawsuits Challenge Gun Ban:** September 12, 2023

Four federal lawsuits were filed challenging the Governor's 30-day ban on carrying firearms in most public places and on state property. Under the order's criteria, the right to carry publicly was suspended only in Bernalillo County.

**AG Says he Can't Defend Gun Order:** September 13, 2023  
The AG informed Governor Grisham that he agrees a debate is needed on the impact of gun violence, it cannot be rebranded a public health emergency to justify a blanket 30-day prohibition against carrying guns.

**Governor Trims Gun Ban:** September 16, 2023  
Governor Lujan Grisham announced a scaled-back version of her earlier sweeping ban on the public carry of firearms in the Albuquerque area, even as legal challenges to her September 8th order continued to mount. The Governor, flanked by Democratic lawmakers, said at a news conference that she was curtailing her order by banning firearms only in public parks and playgrounds.

**Governor Renews Public Health Order:** October 7, 2023  
Governor Lujan Grisham renewed a public health order banning guns in public parks and playgrounds. She also included in the most recent order that the state will organize gun buy-backs in Albuquerque, Espanola and Las Cruces.

**Judge Permits Governor's Gun Restrictions:** October 12, 2023  
A federal judge refused to halt state enforcement of temporary firearms restrictions at Albuquerque-area parks and playgrounds, marking at least a temporary win for Governor Grisham's attempt to combat violence in the state's biggest city.

**Governor Lujan Grisham to Lead Trade Mission to Australia:** October 20, 2023  
Governor Grisham and a group of public and private sector officials headed down under for a business and trade mission to Australia. The Governor met with manufacturing companies interested in expanding into the state and participated in the Asia Pacific Hydrogen 2023 Summit.

The Governor was also expected to make an economic development announcement dealing with clean hydrogen. She looked forward to introducing the fourth global company this year to announce investments in New Mexico.

**NMPMA 2023 Convention Photos**



**NEW MEXICO PETROLEUM MARKETERS ASSOCIATION**  
**CONVENTION**  
**AUGUST 20-22, 2024**

**NMPMA**  
**SANDIA Resort & Casino**  
**Albuquerque**