



State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

October 15, 2021

Evan Williams, Executive Director
Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments
106 West Aztec Avenue
Gallup, NM 87301

RE: Northwest New Mexico and Four Corners Build Back Better Application
Governor Letter of Support

Dear Mr. Williams:

This letter is to add the full weight of the State of New Mexico in support to your regional proposal aimed at advancing and investing in infrastructure projects and workforce programs to grow the future of energy, logistics, and manufacturing clusters in Northwest New Mexico and greater Four Corners region. We support your goal fundamentally transforming the regional economy from boom-bust to robust. The vision of transitioning from a coal, energy production, and resource extraction economy into one inspired to be a global leader and innovator in building a carbon-free economy that utilizes New Mexico's logistical advantages to develop an advanced manufacturing cluster is the economic gamechanger that the Build Back Better grant was designed to catalyze. There is no region of the State that has been more effected by the combined challenges of:

- Loss of jobs and tax base due to the global decline of coal markets and other energy industry downturns.
- High COVID-19 cases per capita as well as morbidity rates per capita from the global pandemic.
- Economic downturn escalated by COVID-19 in rural and tribal communities that chronically led the nation in the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the entire county and lack even the basic infrastructure let alone strategic infrastructure to support economic development.

Our State appreciates the engagement and inclusion in being invited to support this La Ristra Northwest proposal and its aim in a highly competitive national competition. We believe the region is primed for investment and growth, and we are committed to:

- Continuing our support with policy initiatives like our Energy Transition Act and large investment in workforce training to transition coal workers into the jobs of the future and leadership on clean hydrogen legislation that positions New Mexico and the San Juan basin for investment.
- Aligning our Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that is being finalized by the Economic Development Department.
- Leveraging State incentives and programs to match these critical Federal investments.
- Engaging the tribal nations and Pueblos that make up over 75% of the regional population and 50% of the land mass to make sure the share in benefits of this effort.

Finally, I see my office's role in supporting the regional growth clusters as a key component of making our economy strong, equitable, and prosperous for the State, the region, its people, and its communities.

We stand strong together with our industry and community partners to build back better and make our economy more resilient for the generations to follow.

Sincerely,



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor