

Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy
General Action Team
5.7.2020 ♦ 12:00 – 1:30 pm
Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

Notes: Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

Participants: (please verify spelling and affiliation. If you did not receive an invitation directly from New Mexico First, please share your contact information by emailing Sharon Berman at sharon@nmfirst.org so you can be added to the list.)

Governor Lujan Grisham's Office- Patty Keane

Tribal and Pueblo Government- Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Navajo-Hopi COVID Relief

State Departments- Geneva Becenti, Indian Affairs; Karmela Martinez, HHS Income Support Division; Angela Medrano, Human Services Department; Jason New, NMDA; Amy Whitfield, CYFD

Legislators- Rep. Joanne Ferrary, Rep. Phelps Anderson, Rep. Ray Lara, Rep. Melanie Stansbury

Food Providers- Sherry Hooper, The Food Depot and the NM Association of Food Banks; Katie Anderson and Andrea Nash, Roadrunner Food Bank; Helga Garza, Agri-Cultura Network, La Cosecha and NM Association of Food Banks; Tracy Enright, Feeding Santa Fe and The Food Depot, Brian Hammerman, The Food Pantry and the Storehouse; Mike Kivitz, Adelante and The Storehouse; Alice Perez, Community Pantry; Elizabeth Silva, La Cosecha and Agricultura Network; Mag Strittmatter, Executive Director, Roadrunner Food Bank, VP, NM Association of Food Banks

Faith-based Organizations- Ellen Buelow, Interfaith Hunger Coalition; Carlos Navarro, Interfaith Hunger Coalition, Joy Dinero, Interfaith Hunger Coalition

Philanthropy/Funders- Bryan Crawford-Garrett, Thornburg Foundation; Valerie Rangel, New Mexico Foundation

Agriculture Stakeholders and Food Providers- Pam Roy, Farm to Table and the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council; Michael Venticinque, NM Farmers' Marketing Association

Policy/Advocacy Organizations- Tim Davis, NM Center on Law and Poverty; Tyler Eshleman, New Mexico Coalition to Enhance Working Lands (NMCEWL); Clint Harden, Clinton D Harden & Associates and New Mexico First board member; Jonas Moya and Melanie Sanchez Eastwood, New Mexico First, Tsiporah Nephesh, New Mexico Thrives,

Academia- Bruce Hinrichs, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service, Stephanie Rogus, NMSU

Volunteers- Thomas Bivler, Jane Braithwaite, Barbara Leppala with Rep. Melanie Stansbury

Other- Allison Griffin, Cullari Communications Global; Sharon Finarelli, NM Alliance of Health Councils; Raphael Nevins, [Healthy Futures](#)

Lilly: There is a lot happening on the federal front, and state and Pueblo/Tribal governments are affected by federal policy. We will spend time talking about process, including hopes/concerns around the special session. We'll talk



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about opportunities to help promote healthy democracy. We'll spend time digging in and rolling up our sleeves. We'll contextualize this work.

- Many people are worried and wondering about how decisions will be made in the special session. Our elected officials are in a difficult and unenviable position to maintain their own, their family's and the community's safety as well as the health and safety of entire communities. Nobody has a guidebook for how to do this in a legal, ethical and safe way. We have been doing problem solving around ways that can maintain and/or restore confidence in our civic institutions. Since last week, we've been working with a team of folks to draft a sign-on letter with suggestions around what would increase confidence in truly democratic deliberative relationships between our legislators and our community members. A draft went out to everybody on this list as well as coalition partners who pay attention to good governance and ethics issues. You received an email about that. For the purposes of timing, I'm not going to revisit the whole letter. But I want to highlight some of the key ideas that came forward and encourage you to look at your email and to consider as an individual or as an organization whether you would like to sign on to the letter. We will get that to our leadership, copying in our Governor and leadership in finance as well as Director Abbey. We know people are currently focusing on figuring out this process and hopefully we can help guide that process. The seven key ideas are:
 1. Hearings and deliberations should remain public and abide by the US Constitution, New Mexico Constitution, Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978 10-51 to 10-15-4, and House and Senate Rules.
 2. We also ask that communication options are inclusive and entail analog and digital options to provide the greatest access possible to the legislative process.
 3. All hearing and deliberation schedules should be announced at least 24 hours in advance and cannot be changed without 24-hour notice as unexpected changes suppress opportunities for transparency and meaningful public participation.
 4. All hearings and deliberations should continue to be broadcast and allow remote opportunities for public comment with clear and complete written guidance, published public engagement processes, ADA accessible options, and technical assistance capacity to navigate remote session and or social distancing requirements at least 1 month before the Special Session is convened.
 5. We request that all hearings, deliberations, and votes are made between 8am and 8pm to avoid real or perceived suppression of transparency and public engagement.
 6. We suggest avoiding a caucus of either party during scheduled hearing or deliberations to avoid issues with quorum which interfere with transparent and inclusive involvement from communities.
 7. All hearings and deliberations must maintain quorum and the reason(s) for loss of quorum must be posted on the nmlegis.gov website for public review.
- Lilly: If this is almost but not quite there for you and you would like to write your own letter, by all means, if you have an organizational policy that you can't sign on, feel free to lift and share the language. This is co-created, and if these are values and strategies that you think make sense then use them as you will. But if you are in the position we're asking folks to send your name and their signature line. If you can get that to me by tomorrow 8 am, we will send that out as soon as we can get everybody's name copied in. For those of you who have already responded – there are 20 folks – thank you, we appreciate that. Are there any questions about process and timeline?
 - Mike: I'm curious about the letter, because I would never speak against transparency. The Governor has taken a lot of heat, I think somewhat unfairly, for having her re-opening committee, and are they meeting quietly and are they sharing information or not. It's always an important question, but to me

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that's not what I'm most interested in signing on about. I'm not so interested in the process and I know how the legislature works. They're not going to stop at 6:00 pm to be convenient at the best of times. These are not the best of times, and they're volunteering their time up there. Meetings happen late, and things happen. I don't know that we don't have enough transparency built into the system already that we need to be asking for more.

- Lilly: We know that there is some idealism in this and practicalities even in good times. We also know that faith in democratic institutions is even more important during times of crisis when decisions are being made rapidly. Because when people lose confidence in governments, that creates the potential for even greater civil unrest, and that's super concerning. When things already feel pretty unsafe to folks. This isn't the only thing we're talking about today, this was more just as reference. If it's not priority for you and your organization, completely understood. We know that this isn't an everybody decision. This is Core to our mission at New Mexico First and was coming up in conversations inspired by other stakeholders. Since the beginning of COVID, people had already been raising concerns. It's not meant as shade, complaint, critique or finger wagging at anybody. It's really meant as: "We have a shared commitment around democracy and here are some ideas about how to maintain that." What you say makes sense. There are some concrete, specific, content-oriented policy asks that we also have time for, and we'll be spending the majority of our call on that. But we didn't want folks to be like, "why the heck didn't you mention it to us?": I emailed it to everyone. And so if it's a pass for you we understand.
- Mike: I get it and can't disagree with what you're saying. I don't want to play into any narrative, red vs. blue, the Governor vs. the tractors. That's not the big issue for me. But keep going and let's get to the part where we're talking about issues.
- Rep. Ferrary: I think these are all really good suggestions and once we get the framework around how we're going to have a quorum and have people go and sign in and go to our remote places, how we share and are able to abide by some or all of these suggestions is what I'm sure we'll consider. It's a good idea to make sure we have your input as we're putting together how we are able to abide by social distancing and keeping everyone safe and yet being able to be transparent. I think it's fine that you all are presenting this to the legislature to make sure we are able to do whatever we can to abide by these suggestions.
- Lilly: Any last clarifying questions about process? There is no partisan intent. We're a nonpartisan organization and it is core to our mission and how we were founded. It's a deep commitment to democracy and operationalizing it, not just talking about it.
- Clint: It's a good letter. [feedback] Typically in special session we're only going to deal with financial matters. I think it's a good letter. I would just suggest it's not the proper timing for this letter.
 - Lilly: there are a variety and perspectives and opinions about timing. For some it's more important than ever that we honor things foundational to our democracy in terms of openness, transparency and inclusion. For others there's a desire to get tactical. Those are both understandable responses. The majority of stakeholders we've been talking to think that democracy always matters, and that's certainly consistent with our organization's

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mission. For those who would not or could not sign on, that is completely understandable. There are a variety of perspectives. Sometimes the consensus is clear and sometimes it's not. I don't want to shut down communication, but I also know folks were concerned about rolling up sleeves and talking about that more tactical nitty gritty, money/budget. So we want to honor and respect the time we have set aside for that.

Context

Lilly: And so, just to give you all a bit of context. This workgroup has grown significantly and expanded, I'll tell you some of the guiding framework for how this policy workgroup came together before COVID and how that's transforming during COVID.

- Last year, Rep. Stansbury and many other legislators who have been part of the hunger caucus or have been working on food and hunger issues came together with several community stakeholders, including folks who were in the policy/advocacy space in ag, folks from ag itself, folks from food relief and the emergency food sector, the faith community, folks who represented associations, and folks from research and academia. We had a pretty broad based group of folks.
- Pre-COVID, we were saying, NM is in a vulnerable position when it comes to a healthy food supply and resilient agriculture. While we have a lot of assets to build from, we also have things that are concerning when it comes to really drilling in and alleviating if not eradicating hunger. If we were able to make decisions in a more data-informed way, we'd be in great shape. And if in addition to doing that systems and data work, wouldn't it be awesome if we also looked at some of the root causes of hunger and poverty and hunger as a symptom of poverty. And wouldn't it be great if we looked at concrete and specific things that folks respond to everyday, both in ag and the emergency food sector. Wouldn't it be great if looked at those issues as policy priorities. Over 20 nonprofit organizations came together and worked on a shared policy document. Some of those ideas remained in as things that we're really care about moving into the special session, because we see them as foundational to having a systems versus a reactionary response to food and water and hunger. We also see always underlying that agriculture is really key.
- We're going to share things we heard in our Action Teams and conversations. If there are ideas you have, I can tell you if we've heard it and how we are thinking it would fit into a legislative priority, or if we haven't heard about it and we will ask you to tell us more.
 - Mike: The gentleman just said this may just be a money session. As nonprofits we're supposed to whine about money. And it's true: no money, no mission. One of the biggest problems we're facing right now with Storehouse, and lesser with some of the other parts of our disability and senior services are the people that need to be on the front lines working directly with people, where either less social distancing is possible and in some cases not possible. And then liability associated with that. I don't have any great ideas for dealing with this. At Storehouse we've got food. We can process food, but we can't get enough people who will work with the people that are getting the food and getting it out to their vehicles. We've got a lot of people who walk up on foot. We're not able to be open as much as we want to. Roadrunner has been fabulous about getting us a lot of the resources we need. I believe Roadrunner is also facing that same volunteer crunch. Especially volunteers who are willing to interact with people. And then when we get into serving seniors and others, we're asking direct service people to come in. We give them PPE.

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I'm waiting for this to be over and if there will be lawsuits. "You've made me come to work, I worked with this person and now I'm sick." We're kind of damned if we do, damned if we don't. WE don't want to feed less people than we're doing right now. We don't want to not serve seniors, we want to keep serving them. And then for having done those things, we might have some problems. I don't know how you would deal with that as a legislature. It's such a thorny issue.

- Lilly: I'm hearing three primary ideas;
 1. First of all, you're concerned about your ability to meet your mission. And your mission is not only money-driving but it's people-driven. There's something about social distancing that make a lot of sense in terms of health and safety, but are problematic in terms of implementation. That's a piece of it.
 2. A second piece of it that your concerned about, because as nonprofits, we are businesses, and have to consider liability issues as well, is: how do you balance the needs around mission and keeping – whether it's volunteer force or a staff workforce – safe and healthy and minimize risks to your organization of lawsuits that would, if lost, would decimate your ability to fulfill your mission.
 3. And the third that I'm hearing is, how do we just keep feeding people in the safest, healthiest way possible given those tensions?
- Lilly: you're honestly putting on the table that these are thorny issues, you don't have a magic legislative answer, but it's important to you that our policymakers know that this is what you are contending with. Did I get you?
- Mike: Yes. Did I say all that? Yeah, sure, I agree.

Policy

Lilly: Mag, I know that you all had shared on previous calls that you've spent \$1.2 million in the last 30 days at Roadrunner on purchased food, and spent ~\$450,000 at the Food Depot within the first 30 days of COVID. And that's just purchased food. You're also spending more money on transportation, doing more local delivery. When you think about your policy needs to continue playing the vital role you are, both in the emergency response, and the role you of course play in relief, what is it that you all need and want to make sure we include in our asks?

- Mag: As part of the Association of Food Banks in NM, there are five of us that will be shouldering a large responsibility as we move forward through this in the next 18 months, two years, to be at the forefront of providing, not just making sure the food gets to locations but being able to acquire the food at the volume necessary to be able to feed hungry New Mexicans in all 33 counties. And that means not just the amounts that we have been accustomed to of food insecurity prior to the pandemic. What we are anticipating and already seeing is well over 100,000 New Mexicans already having receiving unemployment benefits, that that number will only increase in the foreseeable future. So for us, it's just being able to have the capacity and ability to acquire food at a rate that we never thought we would have to source, because we need to make sure that upstream and downstream are flowing as efficiently as possible. That we can find the food, get it here, and transport it across to our various territories across the state to make sure we are able to serve our missions and are literally helping to feed those who are food insecure and those who are newly food insecure. Tying that up into a bow means having the capacity and the resources available so we can commit to that function and those deliverables in the months and years ahead.

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- Lilly: Have you coalesced around a number about what it would take to maintain capacity and respond to existing and growing need?
- Mag: We're still narrowing that down. It will probably come in somewhere between \$10-12.5 million that is needed from the collective to be able to not only have our budgets, but looking at our magic crystal balls to anticipate what funding is going to look like for any and all nonprofits in the next couple of years ahead. And also making sure that we are anticipating what those needs will be with respect to resources, the product that we need – the food that we need to get our hands on to have inventory. Not only are the food banks needing that inventory itself, but that inventory then goes downstream to all of our partner agencies, some 500 of these partner agencies – like Storehouse – that are playing a critically important role getting enough food out to hungry folks. That's how this all ties together. The five food banks are at the top of this little hill, and then what we are bringing up to ourselves, then we're sending right back down into the communities near and far, and sometimes very isolated. Some places where agencies are closing, that means that all of us then have to go into those territories and make sure that those areas are being fed. That's the responsibility that we see ahead. So it's going to be somewhere between \$10 and \$12.5 million.
- Lilly: Thanks Mag. And to your point and Mike's point, I will say that those ideas were ones that we were committed to, on a different scale, as a policy workgroup, last summer and fall and into the regular session. Moving forward, we still see those as priorities, and they fall within the first priority area, which is strengthening food and water relief and recovery.
- Lilly: Another idea that has come up was an idea that was successful but we've been told everything's on the table. We know that Appleseed, the Governor's office and Representatives Madrid and Stansbury worked on eliminating copays for reduced breakfast and lunches in schools. Folks have said, "We really want to see that money stay in place." They have also raised questions about given the baseline rates of child hunger in NM, and given the economic stability and hardship many New Mexicans are facing, is it worthwhile for our legislature to think about universal free school breakfast and lunches and universal free breakfast and lunches in summer meals programs. Nobody has the magic number on that yet, but as an idea and as a concept it's gaining some speed. Is anyone from Appleseed or the NM Out of School Time Network who have also been working these issues, or Farm to Table, has any additional information to add to that idea.
 - Lilly: We will keep working with folks to explore that idea. But the intent there is to make sure the most vulnerable around us has access to food.

Lilly: Related to water relief and recovery, one of the issues that has been apparent to many in relief efforts and will be an ongoing issue in recovery efforts is access to clean, drinkable water for people, livestock and for bathing. That's not just a water processing issue, it's a water delivery issue. There are some infrastructure questions. So, wondering about what resources are needed by the State Engineer's Office and IAD to address water needs and understand that are disparities in how those water access issues are playing out in our Pueblos and Tribes. There are treaty and water rights considerations that we need to think about how we use resources to honor. Again, we don't have a magic number in mind, but that need is abundantly clear. I wonder if there is anybody else on this call who has more to share about those issues?

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- Mike: I'd like to hear from some of the legislators and people from the state. This session, when it comes up, as much as there are lots of needs, this is not like the federal government getting together saying we should put half a billion, trillion or zillion dollars into something. The biggest issue for the legislature is going to be how do we deal with an up to \$2.5 billion shortfall. Not that the needs that we're articulating aren't there. The question is, how do we advocate for those things when the big issue is fiscal solvency for the state?
 - Lilly: Your point is well taken that people are concerned about being responsible financially and being solvent as a state, and they're also concerned about human rights issues, and the humanitarian crisis on hand. While we have other stakeholder and partners whose primary concern is around fiscal issues and economic development, the Food Hunger Water Ag Policy Workgroup is primarily concerned about how budgets plays out as values and morals document what's most important to us, and are suggesting that when it comes to what's most important to members of this policy workgroup, the primary concerns are how do we get food and water to people and sustain a healthy food system. So your point is well taken and we know those are difficult choices our legislators will need to make.

Lilly: Are there those on the call from IAD, NMDA, any of our representatives or senators are on, who, as you're thinking about priorities, while having a budget that makes sense is of course one, also having a budget that makes sense in terms of prioritizing the needs that really are a priority as another.

- Rep. Stansbury: Maybe we could talk a little about the special session and what our plan and current understanding is on the budget, because I think it will help answer some of the questions that are coming up. First of all, the state has received \$1.25 billion in federal aid. That aid came in multiple tranches to the state, including for educational programs, for food support programs, and for different programs. I think one of the things that needs to happen in the coming weeks and what we're being told by the finance staff, is that we need to figure out how flexible those dollars are, and to see if we can move money around from those federal aid dollars to meet the needs you all are talking about right now. To me, that's priority number one.
 - Rep. Stansbury: I did speak directly with the LFC about this \$10-12 million ask for food supports. What I was told is we need to work with the agencies and see if we can use that federal relief money to meet that need first. If not, then we'll go to the general fund in the special session. I had connected the food banks and Mariana from the Governor's Office and the CYFD, who's handling emergency response. We also need to bring in the finance people because they need to figure out if there is money already sitting in an account somewhere that could help shore up this need. And I think the question about the potential provisionary water structure and other stuff like that, we're going to have to look at whether any existing federal aid can be used to meet any of those needs. Congress is likely to enact another federal relief package in May that will help us shore up some of our revenue loss at the state level. There's also a federal infrastructure package being worked on that could be another trillion dollars in infrastructure money, and that will also help to address some of those needs. SO not everything will have to get addressed through the state or the state budget.
 - Rep. Stansbury With respect to the budget itself, the latest we've heard as legislators is that because the session will have to be short so as not to endanger people interacting at the Capitol, we're not going to go in and do a bunch of micro cuts and rejigger the budget in a highly detailed manner. What we're likely to do is put together a framework for balancing the budget, and as much as possible, try to use reserves

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and unspent balances and other things to shore up the budget for next year, with a shave off the FY21 budget. For many agencies the FY21 budget had gone up six or seven percent. Now it will go up only about one or two percent. So I don't think we'll see cuts to the bone of our agencies in this special session but there is a potential that that could happen in the next budget cycle.

- To give you a sense of the full shape of the budget, we've got to scrub the books and see if we can use that federal money to meet needs. We need to compile those needs into one place so we can actually have those conversations and find the money for them. It's not a lost cause to compile those asks, because we'll look for the money. We're not sure where the money will come from.
- Rep. Anderson: I wanted to echo what Rep. Stansbury said. As I've listened, I hear myself thinking, Ok that's a January '21 issue when we talk about liability. That's not going to be a June special session discussion item as much as I'd love to have it personally, it's not, in my mind, going to be on the June agenda. Nor are a couple of other ideas that have floated. It means we should not let those who hope for these changes and policy directions to become disenchanted with the special session. I too believe it is going to be over in a matter of hours. And so any notion of meaningful policy debate/discussion on new ideas, I don't see when that happens. I think it's going to be ok, we pass \$7.6 billion dollars, now we're going to be way below that, what are we going to take out of the budget. That to me is going to be hard, it'll be very quick, in 8 hours and probably suggests some pre-arrangement in general on some of the larger steps that will help accomplish filling that deficit hole. The number I've been most interested in so far is the 12.5 million. That needs to go top of list. Certainly in the 1.25 billion there must be 12.5 million to fulfill that urgent, critical need, which is a "right now" kind of a need if I understood it correctly. I'm trying to echo what I heard Rep. Stansbury say and that is when June is over, January is right on us. And a lot of the January ideas need to not lose any momentum, because quite frankly, January is almost right now. Try not to get too distracted by the idea that the special session could entertain issues that are not strictly to the FY 21 budget. Thank you.
- Lilly: I wonder if you or other policymakers on the phone – with the food banks who supply the other 500 organizations that are part of the infrastructure of doing emergency food relief, even in good times but more so now. We don't have an exact number around what the water needs are, but we know that they are as urgent and more urgent in some communities across New Mexico, and that's disproportionate. Do you have ideas about whether that's the kind of thing that would be entertained in the special session?
- Rep. Anderson: Don't back up with "we don't have the exact number yet." We live in a health crisis in America and the world that is all about "we don't have the number yet." But get a number like Roadrunner has done and get it out there, quantified early because I think that 1.25 billion that has come for COVID relief – Representative Stansbury mentioned trying to find out where flexibility is at. I think to myself that the feds have that money tied pretty tight. There are a lot of strings attached to that money. But the fact is, the need you're talking about to meet NM's immediate hunger needs are COVID-19 driven and that's where I would have my focus in the next 4 weeks as we go to special session.
- Rep. Ferrary: I was on a call with some other states and they were talking about commodities, livestock and dairy. I think they're having in the next 7 days public comment on how that money would be used. I'm sorry I don't have a link I can offer. Also maybe purchasing for farmers and small distribution. And then also, like Rep. Stansbury was talking about, coming up in May is the CARES 2.0. And that should help farmers be more

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connected to the food distribution. So different opportunities for more produce and even livestock I believe is what they're talking about. All of these things should be solidified before we have to look at what the needs are. Having good nutrition so people could stay healthy. And before we have to consider what we're doing before the special session.

- Rep. Stansbury: I'll add one thing on water, because it's a little complex. The emergency water needs we're seeing for example on the Navajo Nation right now. Patty Lundstrum, who's the Chair of House Finance published an excellent op-ed the other day about the need to finish the Gallup Pipeline Project. That project was part of a Tribal water rights settlement with the tribe that was supposed to bring water to these communities. That's a billion dollar project. It is a federal responsibility, and also there is a need to help connect that pipeline system to smaller communities and homes. It probably needs to be dealt with and fought for at the federal level. There are lots of simmering crises around fresh water and drinking water needs across the state, but that is definitely a '21 session issue to take on. I know myself and Susan Herrera and others have been doing a lot of thinking about water infrastructure and how to streamline the state's design and support system around that. What Lilly is describing are the emergency needs around water hauling and delivering bottled water. To me the only folks that I know that have been controlling that information are Indian Affairs and the Tribes themselves. I'm not aware of any non-Tribal community needs that have been identified on water. That doesn't mean they don't exist, but I haven't heard of any others. **I think we should go back to Indian Affairs to see what the scale looks like.** I agree with Rep. Anderson and Ferrary that that federal money can cover that as well.
 - Lilly: **Let's circle back with Secretary Trujillo and, if appropriate, State Engineer John D'Antonio.**
- Lilly: That line between what is an emergency, urgent issue and what is an infrastructure issue gets blurred. Because, some of the needs around relief are coming because infrastructure. I'm thinking about our friends at the Jicarilla Nation who've also been working through EOC and also NGOs to also address their water needs. And while there are water quality issues, there are also water delivery issues with aging pipes that are galvanized and have lead in them and they're not safe, or there's a perception among the community not to drink the water from the pipes. There's a relief component and there is also an infrastructure component that disproportionately impacts some communities and there's some data the Tribes and Pueblos have themselves. And then in surrounding areas away where there are some concerns around water quality and infrastructure issues. It's both a federal issue but also maybe a "during the regular session" issue.
 - Rep. Stansbury: What I'm trying to flag is timing and jurisdiction. Tribal water infrastructure general is funded by federal programs, and we do have a Tribal infrastructure fund at the state level. But people have been trying to get water to the Navajo Nation for a half century. So we're not going to solve this in the next four weeks. But it's something that we are in earnest going to have to really grapple with, with the next federal relief package and with our January session.
- Lilly: Rep. Ferrary, you had mention thinking and policy related to food systems. Conversations have popped up around how we invest in local food systems, in terms of produce and how we invest in beef inspection and processing production and how do we become less reliant on federal food supply. Do you have thoughts about that in terms of timing and priority? Is this a special session issue? Is this a January issue?
 - Rep. Ferrary: Yes, it's going to be complicated. I think what we need to do is whatever federal funding we can get, put that into developing those connections and into transportation for what farmers might need to get it to our food bank system and things like that. So our last meeting there was discussion about

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- how they were opening more meat processing plants. So we should be able to get from the cattle growers to the processing plants. One rancher in Southern NM donated a whole beef to Casa de Peregrinos. How do we encourage that kind of thing. Yes, we need to continue all of this discussion.
- Lilly: Jason from NMDA had to get off the call. He could have addressed beef processing issues in New Mexico. We'll continue to compile the list of things either for the special session or for the January session.
 - Clint: Representative, thank you for your comment on the ag side of this. From June to January as Rep. Anderson said, is a heartbeat way. That's why we had the Interim Committees, which is an opportunity for those of us in public policy to meet with those interim committees to bring them up to date on what's occurring in our particular interest as it relates to public policy. What some farmers and ranchers are telling me is that the situation in cattle and in the ag industry is similar to the oil patch. If you've got three or four barrels of oil laying around, and you want to go sell them, there's no market for it. You've got to keep your oil. Ranchers ended up in the same situation. Because of the actions the packers are taking right now, ranchers don't have any place to go with their beef. They can go to a feed yard, but that still involves them paying something because they can't get their product into the supply chain right now. Our ranchers are having to hold on to their cattle and feed them. I think that's the tip of the iceberg, that we're not going to know. I appreciate the representatives' comments because they have the most up to date information. I don't think we know yet what the collateral damage from COVID-19 is going to be. Will horse racing be able to happen between now and the first of the year? The economic impact of losing casinos and horse races has got to be pretty big. That's going to have something to do with the 21 session.
 - Lilly: I appreciate you flagging that interconnectedness between other industries that have that impact to ag and to our budget. We did a survey in March and April of folks in farming and ranching and we're hearing a lot of these issues around market instability and supply chain and value chain issues, labor, marketing and distribution. I wanted to give Jonas a chance to share a little bit more on what he's been learning.
 - Clint; I'm worried about if there is going to be a supply for the food bank.
 - Lilly: Those issues have been really important, and that's why we're not looking at just the needs of the emergency food sector, or just the needs of ag, or just the needs around how we address baseline income issues. We're looking at them systemically in this workgroup. And sometimes that means the usual suspects are coming together to establish policy priorities. But sometimes, there are some unusual and new partnerships emerging. But you are right: ag is really core to it, because that addresses some of the food supply issues, and local food systems issues, the relief efforts, and people who are responsible for meals and feeding at all times, but especially now is important. And looking at how that federal policy connects to state policy is also important. Jonas, do you want to add a little bit about the ag issue?
 - Clint: I want to make a comment about water if I may. We've got serious issues up and down the Rio Grande in our Pueblos. For example, one of the Pueblos has several deaths from their leaders. The Native American population doesn't like to talk about what's going on in their worlds. But they've had some COVID-19 cases. The only place they can do their laundry is in Bernalillo. While they were in Bernalillo they contracted COVID. They're looking for ways to use Rio Grande money and have that Pueblo have its

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own laundry. That involves tankers and water buffalos and how do they clean up their water, how do they recycle it. NM Tech is at the forefront of helping those guys. But the Rio Grande and our Pueblos up and down the Rio Grande are kind of struggling with those water issues too. it's not just drinking water.

- Jonas: I can speak a little on cattle prices, processing and the different things that I've heard from our stakeholders. The work continues at the base level at any family farm or ranch. They're continuing to work very hard. Right now on the cattle side it's branding season. Families are out getting ready to brand and process cattle. But you're completely right, when you're talking about the prices, the commodity market has been a roller coaster. But as I look at the futures on CME right now, it looks like some of the live cattle and the feeder cattle are up from last week, so that's a huge plus. This may be due to the disaster relief programs. That work needs to continue. Farmers and ranchers don't get to set their price. The commodity market looks like its going to get better. We need to instill practices that are going to allow our producers to be competitive on the national market. IN policy, the number one item is of course looking to see if we can start up the state inspection facilities again. WE need to approach that with caution to be sure we have a steady amount of cattle to supply that chain, and also that we have markets for the different variety of beef. Because when you process an animal it's not all going to be steaks. It will be different cuts and different grades of cuts. Another thing I would look at too is state relief funding for farmers and producers.
- Bruce: It's amazing how whenever something happens you see how everything is connected. Who would have thought when there was no schools and no restaurants, dairy and beef industries collapse. A lot of it is tied to that supply and demand, that causes a whole bottleneck. We're really good at ramping up, but not many of our industries are good at slowing down because of a perishable item. Keep in mind as we start all this stuff, there are already built-in systems around the state that can significantly provide assistance, and we don't always need to be thinking about how to recreate some things, we also need to figure out how to support existings. Lilly, you alluded to it as well. We have a very good agriculture experiment station in this state that's doing all kinds of work, to try to work on everything to our soil issues, to how are we going to raise something with nothing. Those experiment stations are already there. WE just need to start figure out how to use them better to do those kind of things that we need to do. And we're already looking at those small farms, and how do those small farms go more to the local food needs. Then you've got our Cooperative Extension Service that is a built-in delivery point of education, teaching people that want to start into that local food and raise your own food, and there's no time more prevalent than now to learn how to raise your food, store it for later use, all the things that we used to have to do. We've got a system in place that can do those kind of things. Let's look at the systems we have in the state and maybe not recreate so many things, use some of these in-place infrastructures that are there.

Lilly: That's a good reminder that there's a third policy priority area and that these are conversations that are ongoing. One of the areas is looking at what are those root causes of food insecurity in NM. While part of the solution is around ag and local food systems, and part of the solution is around emergency food relief and ongoing food support to folks who are vulnerable, there are also some underlying issues poverty and the symptoms of that in New Mexico. Some of the ideas that came up were around how are we looking at the state SNAP supplement, how we're looking at the minimum SNAP benefit. Tim or Derek, is there anything you would like to say about SNAP?

- Tim: I agree with what you said about SNAP. I think we'll be looking toward what federal money and flexibilities are to use some of that for state SNAP supplement.

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Lilly: They may not have been able to hang on the whole hour and a half. One of the things that folks have been talking about and they know more of the specifics on, is to take another look to see if there is a way to bridge the gap between what the feds are doing and what our state can contribute to making sure that folks don't go hungry, and second, to make sure that the amount of supplement that folks get is fair. And one of the things that's interesting is when you look at SNAP utilization, and you compare that to other states, utilization in NM is very high. And that's not because we don't have hard-working folks who care about taking care of their families, that's just because there are economic development issues that have an impact in families. So thinking about how those things play together so we do right by each other is part of how this workgroup has always thought together about these needs.

Next Steps:

Lilly: We're not putting a blue ribbon on anything, that's not our place to do. Our place is to say what is our common interest and how do we communicate about that with each other so we all know what each other cares about and is working for and how those things are connected together. And then we share that information with policy makers. So we'll be sharing this emerging list. Folks will have to say, is this a special session issue, is this a January issue? And to Clint's point, there's a lot of work to do in the interim. And to Rep. Anderson's point, January a heartbeat away. Although for some, it feels super urgent and like that's too long because people are sick and dying, and that's not a joke. So those decisions about what's a now issue and what's a January issue, consider who's most vulnerable and who's most at risk. Anybody want to have the last word about ways to keep sharing the information?

- Lilly: We'll be putting our notes together and we'll be taking this conversation plus the other conversations that have been coming up about policy priorities. Again, we're not putting a blue ribbon on anything, we're just saying "here's what we're hearing from many folks who are informed and care about food, water, hunger and ag issues in New Mexico." Thank you all for making time to be on. This team meets every other week. There are reminders on the [website](#) and we send out email reminders.