

**Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy  
Policy & Advocacy Action Team  
7.23.20 ♦ 12:00 – 1:00 pm  
Meeting Notes**

**Facilitator:** Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

**Notes:** Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

In Attendance:

- Sonya Warwick, Roadrunner Food Bank
- Mag Strittmatter, Roadrunner Food Bank
- Rep. Melanie Stansbury
- Xavi Vallejo, NM First
- Ellen Buelow, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Jonas Moya, NM Cattle Growers Assoc.
- Pam Roy, NM Farm to Table, Food & Ag Policy Council
- Carlos Navarro, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Derek Lin, NM Voices for Children
- Tsiporah Nephesh, NM Thrives
- Tim Davis, NMCLP
- Kurt Rager, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry

**I. Updates and what observations from larger policy workgroup meeting last week**

- Rep Stansbury: had meeting with chancellor president and sec of ag. Trying to connect food production with mouths. NMSU Chancellor Dan Arvizu– opportunity to life work up higher. She emphasized the importance of focusing efforts.
- Pam noted that the Food & Ag Policy Council Meet the day before, David Abbey was guest. David advised to come with something substantive – connect food and agriculture. Several agencies at the table and they were interested in working on a collective policy approach to procurement.
- Carlos noted that the report from Feeding America that Roadrunner had sent out was very helpful. The Hunger Caucus will be continuing its work, and Rep. Ferrary is making an effort to find core members from the legislature.
- Ellen said she was excited about the potential flexibility for smaller producers in the state.
- Derek highlighted the asset of bringing people together with diverse perspective. Prospect of innovative solutions.
- Sharon was excited by what seemed like a strengthening muscle in the group to respond to current events and incorporate it into the work
- Xavi – need is out there, excited about seeing how change is driven firsthand.
- Jonas was excited about bringing unity to agriculture.
- Tsiporah said there were a number of great ideas and now they need to have legs.
- Lilly noted we can do a better job of scaffolding and timing, saying what happens when, in what order. The recommendations ranged widely from specifics to general, concrete food/water relief efforts to systemic issues around poverty.



**NEW MEXICO FIRST**  
*People. Ideas. Progress.*

Please contact Sharon Berman at [sharon@nmfirst.org](mailto:sharon@nmfirst.org) if we missed or misunderstood anything in these notes.

- Kurt said the need for cold storage was clear.
- Tim said some of the ideas might require federal action. He said he wasn't sure if the P-EBT program and SNAP benefits would be continued.

Rep. Stansbury said she was hoping to get a synthesis of what people heard and had been mulling over from last meeting. How to translate a good idea into an action item? Predicting that the state will continue to be in shut-down and the budget will need to be cut. Public psyche will demand actions for state to support/sustain economy and protect vulnerable populations. Idea of farm bill is intriguing and is the only workgroup or policy arena that is truly bipartisan and crosses the political spectrum and rural/urban divide. Problem we're trying to solve is economic development, rural poverty and conjoining the two. There will be a hunger for a coherent piece or pieces that bring everyone together.

- Rep. Stansbury noted that it was highly likely that the session will be conducted remotely. It will make it extra critical to get legislation pre-filed in December. The quicker we get something drafted, locked/loaded/ready, move it back a month further, we'll have more success. We'll work with collaborators and hunger caucus. We'll have to make the case to the media and to the public.
- One of most significant bills passed was capping the severance fund. It would not have happened if Damon Ely hadn't written an op-ed in the Journal. Have opportunity to do something significant, consolidate it into drafted legislation and then push. In summary: mechanically, we can get something done. Substantively we need to figure out what we need to get done that brings pieces together, is coherent and needs doing. What does the group see that are big pieces that would be those pieces? It could be initiatives. It doesn't have to be legislation.

Lilly stated that certain programs should be inviolate, hands off. No reduction at all. Related to a farm bill, people said that basic infrastructure needs to be in place: basic programs like extension matter. Pilot programs, such as those by Food Policy Council really make sense. Transportation/cold storage/marketing/processing all need to be addressed because the systems are not in place if we want our food supply chain to serve us in fair, equitable and practical ways.

- Lilly added that in terms of what is not working, anti-donation was an example. Important to target resources where they can best be put to use makes sense. "We've learned a lot from COVID through some of the flexibility has been allowed. If we can take that, and build on that we will do better."

Mag pointed to communication among groups, working with sense of openness with each other across sectors to understand perspectives and points of view around tent pole priorities.

- Rep Stansbury mentioned the possibility David Abbey being interested in strategic investments. She wondered if the LFC would allow briefing during interim on food and hunger. It would have to be tight, no more than an hour. It would have to cover spectrum of needs on economy side and need on poverty side, and target things we think are needed. The LFC crafts budget framework. If they can bake that in, it. **Rep. Stansbury will reach out to David and chairman to see if we can make a presentation.**



Tsiporah addressed the anti-donation issue. She suggested it be amended so it is possible for state to give directly to nonprofits. Some states are setting aside CARES money to get directly to nonprofits. She said they are looking for Republican legislators in order to have a bipartisan effort. Professor Brody recommended putting in a comfortable amendment. Lilly said she recommended Senators Burt and Kernan. 2021 would get a ballot measure on Nov. 2021 and amendment would happen in 2022. Rep. Stansbury thought she recalled such efforts having been made in the past, and recommended contacting legislative librarian to understand what went wrong in the past. She predicted pushback would come not necessarily from legislators, but LCS staff who see their role to uphold the Constitution.

Derek said Voices would be approaching things from tax side. Two prongs: 1) working family tax credit is a great way to reduce financial hardship and increase financial stability for working families. They will put out a fact sheet on how to use the tax credit during the pandemic. Also immigrants. 2) emergency funding for food banks. They will be putting together food insecurity report containing information about increasing funding for increasing funding for emergency food assistance. **Derek will confer with Mag to gain more insight.** TANF only reaches 20% of eligible families. They are trying to think of ways to help make TANF more effective in reducing poverty (which is what it was designed to do).

Tim noted that they were concerned that immigrants were left out of federal relief. The federal government has given states options to exercise flexibilities. Thinking about how state can take independent action apart from the federal flexibilities. They are working on that with Voices and will be sure to share with group. He invited the group to share their ideas with him. His email is :

- Rep stans – pandemic forced agencies to find flexibilities they didn't think they had. Wonder if we might consider doing bill – blanket authority that gives permission to agencies to get all the flexibilities they can to address poverty, permission and direction. Thematically organized around income and food insecurity.
- Lilly noted that blanket authority should be as generous as possible due to historic poverty in the state
- Tim said there might be a way to incentivize state agencies to expand flexibilities.

Pam predicted several substantive things would come up. The statewide waiver around workforce is relevant to institutions providing meals. They are worried about losing their poorly paid staff. We might end up with 3 or 4 bills. How to tie them directly together? Relaxing programs for agencies could be an underpinning.

