

NEW MEXICO

STATE PERSONNEL OFFICE

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

L. Teresa Padilla
Director

State Personnel Board
Laura A. Liswood
Chair

David F. Cunningham
Vice Chair

Cristin M. Heyns-Bousliman
Member

Carol A. Parker
Member

Fred Radosevich
Member

State Personnel Board Meeting

Willie Ortiz Building

2600 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM

Friday, December 9, 2022

MINUTES

Procedural Items:

- Chair Liswood called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- Director Padilla led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by roll call. Chair Liswood, Vice Chair Cunningham, Member Parker and Member Radosevich present. Member Heyns-Bousliman absent.
- Chair Liswood asked Ms. Forlizzi if she had a list of those wanting to make Public Comment. Ms. Forlizzi stated there were no in-person requests and advised Chair Liswood that she had received 9 email requests for public comment, one of which contained 185 comments compiled in a word document. List for Public Comment closed.
- Approval of Agenda – Vice Chair Cunningham moved to approve the agenda as presented, Member Radosevich second. Roll call, agenda adopted unanimously.
- Approval of October 28, 2022 Minutes - Vice Chair Cunningham moved to approve the minutes as written, Member Radosevich second. Roll call, minutes from the October 28, 2022 meeting adopted unanimously.

General Public Comment

Board Administrator, Denise Forlizzi read 8 of the 9 public comments received via email by 5:00 p.m. December 8, 2022.

Chair Liswood requested the full text be made available and be made part of public record and attached to minutes from this meeting.

Director Padilla gave the following report:

- Given the discussion last meeting regarding the HR class study, I reached out to my counterpart at Bernalillo County, Bernadette Perez, Director of Human Resources and asked her to review the study and the salary schedule. Ms. Perez stated: "Overall, the Human Resources study is

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comprehensive, and the new salary structure is relative with the market. The newly created classifications appear to be reflective of the HR functions being performed state-wide at both the State Personnel Office and state agencies."

Training continues to do many great things! Some quick highlights:

- Pilot with Corrections Department – Training Unit has provided two trainings to agency HR staff. Corrections has requested a specialized LIUE training. We see an increase in Corrections staff attending trainings being offered to management/all State employees.
- We worked directly with Department of Veterans' Services to provide a two-day supervisor training for their agency. We received an email yesterday from Gabrielle Sanchez-Sandoval, who is their General Counsel and I want to share some of her comments "Everyone at SPO was helpful and collaborative and engaged! NMDVS feels lucky to have such a rich resource for state employees in the content and presenters. We are a small agency with an important role to serve and assuring our staff is well prepared is critical. Thank you all for being a part of moving NMDVS is the right direction."
- Training developed a course on Tools for Recruitment/Retention for managers to help them understand the Board Rules and the available tools for addressing compensation issues. The first class was well received with one attendee saying the class should be a requirement for all new managers.

Comp and Class

- Three classification studies in process
- Started in-depth analysis of Engineering occupational structure
- Will meet with agencies to discuss occupational families with minimal use

QA and Data

- Completing quality assurance check of FY22 IPBs
- Completing quality assurance check of Safety Sensitive random testing
- Completing quality assurance check of Q1 SPO approved actions audit sample

Unions

- We are actively engaged in wage negotiations with both AFSCME and CWA regarding the FY24 Legislative Increases, for July 2023. We appreciate the collaboration with the unions.
- We are also engaged with both Unions regarding the effects of the recent decision to rescind the statewide non-mandatory telework policy, effective January 1, 2023. We are scheduled to meet with them next week.

Staffing joining SPO since last meeting:

- Lisa Garcia - Labor Relations Specialist
- Jessica Tolle – Assistant General Counsel and Diversity Officer
- Jaime Trujillo - Finance and Admin Services Manager

Stand for Questions. No questions from members.

Approval Request of Annual Safety Sensitive Review

Cynthia Anaya from the QADA division presented the annual review for approval of safety sensitive positions. Chair Liswood asked why positions go in and out of the Safety Sensitive designation? Anaya answered that positions were reclassified. The term Omnibus was defined at the request of Liswood. Member Parker moved to approve the request; Member Radosevich second. Roll call by Director Padilla. Motion carried.

Approval Request of State Park Law Enforcement Ranger Classification Study.

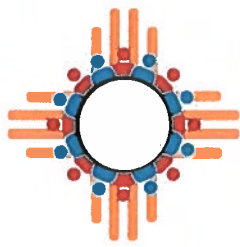
Melanie Morgan, Compensation and Classification Analyst, made the presentation. State Park Law Enforcement Classification recognizes this class as the certified law enforcement officers they are. Impact of new classifications and corresponding compensation will positively impact the goal of achieving a 10% vacancy rate.

Director Toby Velazquez of the State Parks Division stated it has taken 11 months to put the study together. The Division has many locations in rural areas, and it has been difficult to recruit. 45% vacancy rate cannot meet mission of public safety, especially in rural settings.

Bureau Chief Manuel Overby is a law enforcement officer who served as director for 24 years. It is an honor to serve and looks forward to the results of this effort. Believes it will go a long way in recruiting efforts.

Chair Liswood asked what the average response time is in rural parks? Many park officers live in the state park as they are a housing agency. A requirement for certain positions is to be living in that area so they can be more responsive. Housing is part of position, to be embedded in the area they serve.

Member Radosevich commented he was glad to see we are getting these positions in parity. Member Parker asked which colleges offer degree programs that are required by some of these positions? It seems that young people are quite interested in environmental issues, how can we increase "home grown" talent? Director Velasquez stated Western NM University has an initiative to create a cradle-to-career program. State institutions have programs that



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fit the needs of these positions, needs to be a more specific pathway to help supplement programs already out there.

Chair Liswood asked Chief Overby, based on your expertise, what is the estimated time it will take to see a reduction in vacancy rates? Overby said this will have an immediate impact on ability to recruit personnel.

Velasquez stated when we are on equal playing field, it allows each to choose where to work based on their mission. We will see a difference in 6 months and within a year we will be in a better position than we have been in the last 15 years.

Liswood asked that they come back in 12 months' time with an update.

Velasquez added we wouldn't be here without the support of this administration and EMNRD Secretary Cottrell Propst. It has taken partnership to get us here.

Member Radosevich moved to approve the State Park Law Enforcement Ranger Class Study; Vice Chair Cunningham second; roll call; motion carried.

Approval Request for Alternative Pay Band Renewal

Melanie Morgan requested approval for annual Alternative Pay Band (APB) renewal stating there are 158 APB's for renewal which represents a reduction from 305. APB's are implemented when there are high vacancy rates and high rates of turnover, aiding in recruitment. Member Radosevich observed that some of these have been in place for quite some time. Why aren't they moved to the appropriate pay band? Ms. Morgan stated many are in the queue and a reduction of 158 from 305 is quite remarkable in one year.

Max Cordova, Operations Manager stated that, by SPB rule, we need to establish what a classification is and the relative size that classification exists in. Occupations exist in the general salary structure; they already have an APB assigned to them as we recognize there is a shift in the market for that classification. We are shifting toward occupational salary schedules, that is the path we are taking, and it will take some time to evaluate what these occupational schedules are and what the best schedule is that fits that relative size of jobs.

Member Parker commended the team on the reduction of APB's, we have used APB's to do an "end run" to get appropriate pay for some positions.

Vice Chair Cunningham moved to approve the APB Renewal; Member Radosevich second; roll call; motion carried.

Approval Request for 2022 Annual Classification Plan

Max Cordova, Operations Manager, presented the request stating we are seeking the Board's approval per SPB rule. The report is required annually, ensuring consistent application of the classification system. Cordova explained the classification system helps us understand what the job is, the expertise needed, and qualifications required to do that job. The next step is the job evaluation where a committee is established and reviews jobs using the Hay methodology to determine the expertise and skills that go into that job and determines the relative size of that job and then assigns a point value to a particular job size. From there, we create job descriptors, job evaluations and job specifications. From there, we get to this notion of class studies – single classification or occupational.

Cordova gave reasons for a class study, including: substantial changes in the type of work or essential functions of a job over time; changes in organizational responsibilities including industry and technology evolution (the IT jobs are good examples of these changing landscapes; another is an occupation such as behavioral health, where credentials are evaluated on a regular basis); and creation or identification of new job duties not being captured in existing classifications (park rangers, for example -- they were using a generic classification shared with peace officers and non-peace officer certified counterparts, necessitating the need for the classification study).

With the recent board approval of the State Park Law Enforcement Peace officer salary schedule, Cordova stated that covers all peace officer classification studies we have for that particular schedule as of today. What went into that schedule was a reevaluation of certain classifications and it didn't make a change to the job, but a change to the pay in that schedule. Currently, management within these groups is occupying generic classifications.

One of the big things we did in 2022 was inactivate 205 classifications that had no use, thus reducing the total classification listing.

Looking to 2023, we will review existing occupational structures such as engineering and IT, and overall, determine if the structures are being competitively used. In some cases, the industry and the market may be outpacing the schedules. Engineering is an example, the new engineer is in the proper schedule, but for mid-management and seasoned engineers, the structure may need to be adjusted for that area of expertise based on what the market is showing. We will identify deficiencies and make recommendations accordingly.



We will also look at the families with minimal use and work with agencies to identify what the best use is for that classification. We anticipate inactivating further unused classifications.

Stand for Questions.

Chair Liswood asked how many classifications there are,

Cordova replied 1,010 and gave some context on the number of classifications, saying there is no finite number for classifications. When we look to other states, there may be upwards of 2,000 or as low as 800. What we understand is that we have sufficient classifications to provide services needed in New Mexico.

Chair Liswood mentioned that Cordova stated some classifications and positions require certification and recertification, why doesn't that get included in job requirements to maintain their certifications. How does that come into this conversation?

Cordova stated it depends on licensure and the level of change it constitutes. During the job evaluation, we consider licensure and the requirements for renewal.

Director Padilla added that the agency's minimum requirements become a requirement of the job. Helps ensure that every applicant meets the minimum qualifications.

Vice Chair Cunningham asked for a clarification of the 289 classifications in Occupational Salary Schedules (OSS).

Cordova confirmed 289 of the 1010 classifications are in the market-enhanced OSS; the remainder are in the general salary schedule.

Cunningham then asked about the difference in the studies, what are the metrics used to see how the reclassification works over time?

Cordova stated that compa-ratio is one of the better measurements we use to be sure agencies have ability to recruit, pay appropriately and see how it effects retention. We measure pay relative to mid-point and look for effective use. When we dive deeper, we measure and assess utilization that was assigned. What is the overall compa-ratio? Cunningham would like to see that in writing - look at the compa-ratios for the last 5 years to see what that looks like.

Chair Liswood asked Cunningham if he was correlating causality between the vacancy rates and these classifications? He replied yes. Liswood asked Mr. Cordova for his thoughts.

Cordova stated they considered vacancy rates in the schedules and there is a definitive relationship. First, they ensure they have the right classification to recruit the right people. Then we work with agencies to ensure they have appropriate pay line range and width to meet the need of the agency. Many agencies have budgetary constraints, or other issues,



and we partner with them as much as possible to be sure they have the structure and classification to do what they need to do. When an agency has a high vacancy rate, they may come back to us. We brainstorm ideas and look at minimum requirements to better appeal to more applicants. There is a fine line, we must assess a job as we want to be sure we don't end up adjusting the size of the job.

No further questions.

Vice Chair Cunningham moved to approve the 2022 Annual Classification Plan; Member Radosevich second; roll call; motion carried.

Approval Request for 2022 Annual Pay Plan and Compensation Report

Max Cordova, Operations Manager, presented the report referencing the purpose of the pay plan and compensation report. He stated we must ground our compensation and pay plan on what the jobs are and be able to ensure consistent application. With the report, we are able to analyze appropriate placement and ensure equitable pay rates for classified workers. The most exciting item that surfaced in 2022 was the \$15 hourly wage and combined compensation package that Gov. Lujan Grisham signed into law. Importantly, it helped us address compaction from that minimum wage increase. Prior to that, the minimum wage was in \$10.50 range, so it was a significant shift that encompassed multiple pay lines and required additional funding to prevent compaction in all pay lines and resulted in the creation of a whole new general salary schedule.

Cordova discussed the average base salary in states close to NM and stated that we are number 3 and with our robust total compensation program we are competitive with the 8 other states in region.

Cordova also discussed inflation and employment cost index – inflation is increasing at an exponential rate, and we are trying to react in the best way possible. Within the past 2 years, the legislative increases have greatly benefitted NM. With updated salary schedules, agencies are able to pay closer to market rates which highlights how beneficial FY23 increase was. Shows significant shift compared to prior years and the model shows we were able to keep compaction minimal and the graph indicates the compaction model worked.

Lastly, the big takeaway for us is that with the prior 2 years' legislative increases, we have been able to exceed 8-state average, which is a great thing to see.

Stand for questions.



Chair Liswood began by asking about the vacancy rate in New Mexico and how it compares with the regional states which also have some rate of vacancy. First, do you know what that is, and can you get a correlation between NM average pay which is less than some and more than others. How does that correlate to vacancy rates. If there's no correlation, then we're looking at the wrong issue.

Cordova stated that in some years, the legislative increase was significantly higher than recommended wage rate and inflation. So, it depends on the length of term we are looking at. In 2015-2018 there were no legislative increases, so overall, the number is flat with recommended increases.

Chair Liswood referred to the compa-ratio at the corrections department, at a senior level, that has the highest and lowest compa-ratio. What conclusion do you come to?

Cordova answered that the good thing is that we allow for flexibility for agencies to determine appropriate pay. SPO's perspective says here is the schedule for your occupational group, and agencies have discretion to pay what they can or want. Corrections at the lower level uses the tools and model that works for them.

Chair Liswood asked have you thought about the correlation with Adjudication and about the number of decisions that end up being overturned at lower levels versus the senior level? Mr. Cordova said the agency will have the knowledge of the recommendation of a particular case, so we can have that discussion.

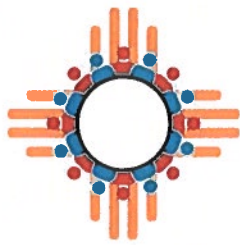
Chair Liswood suggests that one more deep dive with that group might be useful. One last request, page 27 the chart shows classified employees by gender, and she would like to see data by gender by pay.

Cordova will note that. Member Parker asked Chair how she would define gender and Liswood replied she will rely on SPO's definition of gender.

Cordova said he is happy to advise the board that SPO is working with DoIT and various focus groups to expand the gender reporting elements. He is confident that the next report will have clear definitions as well as salary data reflecting gender and pay.

Vice Chair Cunningham referred to pages 27, 28 asking what is source of data in the charts? Cordova replied there is US government website resource that provides demographic information with wages.

Vice Chair Cunningham asked to please note the site used on the tables going forward, that would be helpful. He added that he has listened to wage economists who said the inflationary spiral can only be cured by recession. Are you following that? What happens when that happens?



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Cordova replied that we are monitoring this, and our department does its best to give Director Padilla as much information as we can. The economy is something that the legislature, governor and SPO really must consider. As we have seen, it can change from one day to the next; we try to prepare for those situations.

Member Radosevich thanked Cordova for the report noting that it is very detailed. His comment is that it looks like we're doing well on salaries, finally getting them to where they need to be. State has a good retirement program and a huge vacancy rate. No one mentioned salaries in public comment. What are we trying to do to improve the vacancy rate? We hear that within 6 months to a year, we will have a big change. What happens when or if we don't? Where do we go from there? Where are we going to be when the economy dumps and the state is not flush with money anymore, which we've seen happen?

Cordova replied that a very fluid response will be required. We create a lot of the classifications from the optimistic view. Taking a step back, across all industries, we're seeing a changing work force. We can monitor it and stay on top of it, but we haven't seen anything to this extent before. The great thing about the schedule is how wide it is enabling us to encompass different budgetary needs. We look to partners (GSD, PERA) to look beyond wages. We all must look at it all and ask what will be the best tool given the circumstance? No answer today, but opportunities exist, and we want to be at the forefront.

Chair Liswood asked Director Padilla to please put together a calendar of what we approved and when we must review?

Padilla replied we already have that and have put agencies on notice that there will be further reports needed from them. We will share that with you, and have it scheduled as you have asked based on the approval dates.

Chair Liswood asked Ms. Forlizzi to provide the rolling calendar monthly.

Vice Chair Cunningham commented that based on his experience in the private sector, money does not always solve the problem and appreciates the analysis. He thinks we will have to come up with other tools besides money.

Member Parker said she believes this agency is in a responsive position rather than initiating position relative to decisions regarding spending and utilization of assets we have at any given time. SPO is keeping aware of national trends, we have a very different population - our population and economic situation is different than many other states. There are a lot of moving parts, we need to recognize that between the changing dynamics of this office and the legislature, there is an interplay so change may not happen in a single calendar year.



Chair Liswood stated the high vacancy rate is a concern of the board, SPO, and employees themselves and she asked that we continue to be as innovative and creative as possible around these issues. Thank you for your presentation and answers.

Vice Chair Cunningham moved to approve the 2022 annual pay and compensation report; Member Radosevich second; roll call; motion carried.

Adjudication Litigation Update

Judge Haught presented the 2nd quarter through present information and stood for questions.

Vice Chair Cunningham asked would it be helpful to establish guidelines to help move cases along?

Haught replied that Adjudication has implemented a new streamlined process.

1. Case dates are set 6 months after we receive notice of appeal which gives parties adequate time for discovery and for ALJ to hear the appeal and get decisions to the board. If you look at the dates of decisions we are getting now, the turnaround is quick.

2. The pre-hearing conferences are scheduled 2 weeks before the hearings - putting onus on parties to be prepared. We retain hearing date for cases going through settlement and ensure dates are held. We are being very efficient. Parties are given a window to settle and if they don't, it goes to hearing. There are not many delays at this point.

Cunningham stated the parties are the problem and they need to be prepared.

Haught replied that parties have 7 weeks to submit stipulated pre-hearing order. Allow discovery and hearings are scheduled within 6 months, which is efficient. You won't see cases going forward that have been languishing in the office for years.

No further questions.

Executive Session

Chair Liswood moved for the board to enter Executive Session for purposes of discussing the pending administrative appeals listed on the agenda, Vice Chair Cunningham second; roll call; motion carried. Off the record at 11:00.

Motions on Administrative Appeals

Chair Liswood stated the board is back and we are on the record – the time is 11:37.

Member Radosevich abstained from voting in the Nunley matter as a family member works for that individual.

1. *Bazan, Frances & Marquez, Natalie v. New Mexico Corrections Department*, Docket Nos. 21-013 & 21-014

Member Parker moved to adopt ALJ recommended decision to reinstate employment with the modification that a formal letter of reprimand be issued for each appellant as the dismissals were improper and overturned and appellants be reinstated and awarded back pay and benefits. Vice Chair Cunningham second; roll call; motion to adopt recommended decision with modification carried.

2. *Nunley, Michael v. New Mexico Corrections Department*, Docket No. 20-035

Vice Chair Cunningham moved to adopt the ALJ recommended decision; Member Parker second; roll call; Member Radosevich abstained from vote. Motion carried.

Other business and Adjournment

Next meeting to be held in person and broadcast live on February 3, 2023.

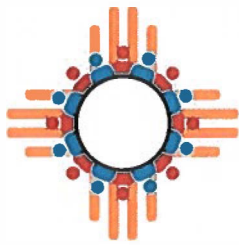
Chair Liswood asked Director Padilla for a plan to integrate the public comments received today and in general in the minutes.

Padilla stated that SPO has, over the last weeks, received many emails, phone calls voicing concerns from state employees. All emails have been read and voicemails have been heard and all comments will be considered on our plan forward on rescinding the telework policy. Padilla gave a brief history about the telework policy. In 2020 when pandemic began, SPO created a statewide emergency telework policy. That policy was in place until end of April 2021, at which time we developed a non-emergency telework policy. That policy was indicating a shift from the emergency situation to a non-emergency due to having more tools, vaccinations, better testing, and community spread was lower. The non-emergency policy that exists today has been rescinded. Options were for hybrid return to work and many have come back to the office in a hybrid model. Still many employees are working from home 100% of the time, notice has been given and we are negotiating with the unions on the impact of the recission.

Vice Chair Cunningham asked if it is being considered that each secretary can decide for their agency? Padilla answered, no, the policy is set by SPO.

Chair Liswood asked what is being taken into consideration?

Padilla replied we are receiving and analyzing the comments and are in discussion with specific agency leadership about implementation. All things are being considered, which includes exceptions to the policy as needed for health conditions, or for offices that may not be available for all when the recission becomes effective.



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Member Radosevich stated everyone needs to know ahead of time to make the arrangements needed. He added there should be an exception based on outbreaks in flu, COVID and the State may consider reverting to teleworking for a week or two should that happen. It has been an effective tool for the schools.

Chair Liswood asked if we are aware of what other municipalities are doing?

Director Padilla answered that we polled surrounding counties and cities and there are some that are 100% back in the office. She also made it clear that this is not return to work but return to work in the office. We are not implying people have not been working while at home.

Vice Chair Cunningham asked about the Board's role in this issue?

AAG Joe stated the Board is instrumental in appointing Padilla in role as director. Board's input is important for oversight and general guidance.

Chair Liswood stated we do not have final say. AAG Joe agreed, saying the Board empowered Padilla to execute her role as director as needed and as she is doing.

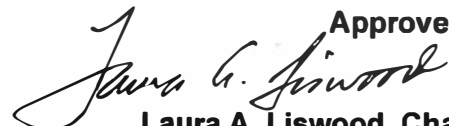
Chair Liswood asked if each union had an equal reaction? Padilla stated both unions are in the discussion saying next week is our first formal meeting with each union about their concerns about effects of the rescission of the policy. There have been discussions, but not negotiations until next week.

AAG Joe replied for her working from home is effective for her. She is in the office 2 days per week under the current leadership.


Padilla said executive agencies don't have discretion. Non-executive agencies, if they are elected or an adjunct, can choose whether to follow the policy.

Chair Liswood asked Director Padilla to provide recommendations on the best process and procedures when the board receives more than 25 requests for public comment.

Vice Chair Cunningham moved to adjourn; Member Parker second; roll call; motion carried; meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

Approved:

Laura A. Liswood, Chair
State Personnel Board

Attest:


L. Teresa Padilla, Director
State Personnel Office

Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO

From: Allie Alaimo <allie.sf@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2022 4:51 PM
To: Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO
Subject: [EXTERNAL] General Public Comment for December 9, 2022 SPO Board Meeting

CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

Denise,

I am submitting public comment regarding *Agenda Item II. General Public Comment* for the December 9, 2022, SPO Board Meeting, per the instructions provided. I have provided my public comment in letter format below. My contact information is:

Allie Alaimo
[505-417-1623](tel:505-417-1623)
allie.sf@icloud.com

[Public comment on agenda items can be made in person or by emailing your comment to DeniseM.Forlizzi@spo.nm.gov by 5:00 p.m. December 8, 2022. Email comments must include the commenter's name and contact information, the agenda item being commented on, and take no longer than 2 minutes to read, as they will be spoken into the record by the board administrator during the public comment portion of the meeting.]

Thank you.

My name is Allie Alaimo and I'm an Advanced Environmental Scientist. I'm writing this letter in response to the State Personnel Office's (SPO) decision to rescind telework. Many of my colleagues have made calls to the office of Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham and SPO to inform them they will not be returning to in office operations. These hard-working colleagues not considered in this decision will be impacted ultimately affecting the entire state.

Our department secretary stated in a department-wide meeting that we simply cannot afford to NOT embrace telework in order to remain competitive in this job market. The November 4, 2022 US Jobs Report showed 1.9 jobs for every job seeker proving there is no shortage of available career opportunities for some of New Mexico's best assets. Rescinding telework means losing many hardworking employees to the private sector and to institutions out of state.

The decision made to rescind telework diminished my confidence that we're all in this to better New Mexico. There was no collaboration or communication involved in this decision and it seems there was little thought to the consequences. Many employees have made serious life decisions with the support of the Environment Department continuing telework: purchasing a home and moving nearly two hours away from our physical office, expanding their family, and turning down other job offers. Telework proved that employees with positions that don't require in person duties can be more productive and more successful than ever. Furthermore, telework increases employee satisfaction (therefore employee retention) whilst reducing our carbon footprint. Of the 11 people I work closest with, 8 of them are now actively searching for other opportunities.

In addition to being an Environmental Scientist, I became a first-time mom during the pandemic. In my case, rescinding the option to work from home would mean a drastic change to my baby's life and weaning on a strict deadline, both of

which is not healthy per the American Academy of Pediatrics. Further, I would have less than 30 days to find full time childcare in a city where parents have been on reputable childcare waitlists for nearly two years (signing up before the birth of their child) and have yet to receive a spot. I have called nearly 10 daycares in the last week and was unable to find a reputable spot for my daughter, under 2.

Hiring a friend as a mother's helper rather than sending my daughter to daycare allowed me to never feel as though I had to choose between raising my daughter and retaining a career I worked so hard for. I am so proud to be working to protect New Mexico for future generations while raising one of them. I didn't miss important milestones and was a role model careerwoman for my daughter. I have maintained exemplary status in ALL categories of my annual evaluations prior to and throughout teleworking. I love New Mexico: it is the place I was born, raised, educated, have chosen to raise my own kids. I WANT to serve the people of New Mexico. The SPO email notification made it clear that I am expendable and current leadership above my department does not value hardworking state employees.

Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO

From: Bargelt, Lindsey, ENV
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2022 2:21 PM
To: Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO
Subject: Dec 9 Agenda Item: II. Discussion Item: General Public Comment

Here is my public comment for 'general public comment':

I am not alone in saying that state workers in general are very dismayed at the blanket end to the teleworking policy. It seems that the directive came down as a political optics issue, which is odd considering this administration was just re-elected. Yes, there is an issue with empty office spaces and the public being served. This is an opportunity to pare down the budget with getting rid of unnecessary office space, and the reason the public isn't being served is perhaps the 24% vacancy rate. If there are issues with individuals not performing their work while teleworking, that is a management issue and should not punish those of use that are more efficient at home away from workplace distractions. The end to this policy is causing many to leave, worsening the problem of underpaid state workers being overworked even further. Employers these days need to be competitive to retain and recruit or the NM public will end up not being served at all.

Thanks,



Lindsey Bargelt, Environmental Scientist & Data Steward
New Mexico Environment Department
DOE Oversight Bureau, Los Alamos Oversight Section
1183 Diamond Drive, Suite B, Los Alamos, NM 87544
Work Cell: 505-490-3257
<https://www.env.nm.gov/>
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO

From: T B <tashaburns@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2022 12:20 AM
To: Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO; T B
Subject: [EXTERNAL] General Public Comment for December 9, 2022 SPO Board Meeting
Attachments: 2022-11-29 Statewide Telework Policy to State Employees.pdf

Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

Denise,

I am submitting public comment regarding *Agenda Item II. General Public Comment* for the December 9, 2022, SPO Board Meeting, per the instructions provided. Since I reference a letter, I included it as an attachment but I anticipate the Board will be familiar with the letter. [Public comment on agenda items can be made in person or by emailing your comment to DeniseM.Forlizzi@spo.nm.gov by 5:00 p.m. December 8, 2022. Email comments must include the commenter's name and contact information, the agenda item being commented on, and take no longer than 2 minutes to read, as they will be spoken into the record by the board administrator during the public comment portion of the meeting.]

My name is Tasha Burns. My comments are in response to the November 29, 2022, letter regarding rescinding the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy.

I am currently teleworking to my state job and appreciate the Board Administrator reading my emailed comments. I am submitting my comments as a resident and voter of New Mexico who has worked alongside public servants in Texas and New Mexico for 18.5 years.

Especially since March of 2020, I have witnessed state employees serve their community with integrity, dedication, and grit. The telework policy is a high-value, low-cost benefit that feels hard-won to state employees. The telework policy is a primary reason I was able to recruit highly-qualified candidates for two positions, and is a reason I remained with the state when changing jobs this year.

I live in Albuquerque used to commute to Santa Fe. Not commuting saved me the equivalent of 25 days in one year. Since teleworking has been successful in my experience, it now seems absurd that I was willing to sacrifice that much time getting to and from work. If my new job was not close to home, I would have immediately began looking for a non-state job when the letter came out. I am more open to non-state work than I was previously. I am certainly replaceable as a state employee. However, I am not expendable, and neither are any of my coworkers.

I respectfully ask that Board Members leverage your power and influence to halt the timeline given in the letter, and ask that SPO accomplish these two items:

1. Consult experts to determine if rescinding the policy will increase the vacancy rate and implement mitigating strategies.
2. Engage in meaningful discussion and problem solving with Cabinet Secretaries and Labor Representatives to implement a more reasonable timeline *if* rescinding the policy is the only option.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tasha

tashaburns@hotmail.com (505) 226-2278

Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO

From: Coffman, Aaron, ENV
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2022 2:44 PM
To: Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO
Subject: Public comment for SPO Board RE: Rescindment of telework policy

Ms. Forlizzi,

I am emailing you to provide comment for the SPO Board meeting, regarding the agenda item of the rescindment of the telework policy.

This is my comment: For over 8 years, I have been a dedicated state employee charged with helping to defend the health and welfare of New Mexicans. This work involves me visiting multiple communities throughout the state each year and interacting with residents, workers, and businesses. It brings me a deal of pride to serve my community through civil service, as I know many of my coworkers do as well. Telework has helped me to become a more efficient employee than I ever was in an office environment during the times that I am not in the field. Although I do understand the need to ensure responsiveness on a face-face basis, the much greater challenge to our ability to properly serve the public is the difficulty we face in hiring sufficient personnel at all levels of the organization chart. It had already been the case that our main competitor for my type of position is federal facilities. These facilities often provide partial telework options to employees of relevant positions, that is tailored to the needs of the organization. Rather than rescinding the policy as a blanket, please work with the departments to give them the ability to tailor their telework options to their individual needs.

Thank you,

Aaron Coffman
Environmental Scientist/Specialist
505-918-2084

Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO

From: Hilbert, Mary, ENV
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2022 3:00 PM
To: Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO
Subject: Concerns Regarding returning to overcrowded office buildings

Good Afternoon,

Rescinding the telework policy puts many of us older workers into a difficult position. I need to work but after losing two family members (my mom and my brother) to Covid I am concerned about my own health. The cubicles in these offices are mashed together resulting in lots of exposure within the office space, bathrooms, and common areas.

Several of the schools are already closing due to high rates of teachers and students being sick with Covid, flu and RSV. Parents we work with cannot help but bring some of those viruses to the work environment unknowingly exposing the whole office.

I have been teleworking since we were sent home after the Covid outbreak. My work is done on a computer, and I have communicated with my supervisors via Zoom meetings, by phone and physically meeting when requested.

All my evaluations have been very good. Since I have been teleworking, I have saved money on transportation and my health has improved with better food choices and a more relaxed environment in which to concentrate on what is important... doing a good job ! The office environment is loud , distracting, and unsanitary...

I think the focus should be on getting rid of some of the buildings leased for state employees. Many of those building owners do not even live in New Mexico !

Respectfully,

Mary Hilbert
Data Handling Specialist – Operations
NM Environment Department
Air Quality Bureau
525 Camino del los Marquez
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-629-6454
mary.hilbert@env.nm.gov
Twitter: @NMEnvDep |
#IamNMED
www.env.nm.gov

Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO

From: Peters, Eric, ENV
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2022 4:53 PM
To: Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO
Subject: Telework comments for SPO Board

Dear SPO Board:

Telework has been a great success for my group. I have invested in equipment and environmental improvements that enable me to get more work done at home than I could with the additional distractions and inferior equipment at the State office building. Most of the work I do is solo work, but communications have been improved compared to time before teleworking. I have helped multiple consultants during days I was on vacation that would not have been answered for many days when I worked in the office.

It is hard to find, train, and retain qualified employees. I hate to imagine the upcoming increased burden for hiring if a critical mass of good employees suddenly departs because of abrupt, unjustified efforts to reduce the effectiveness of employees by requiring them to spend every day in meaningless meetings.

Please retain telework as an option. Make decisions on telework as if not all jobs in the State were exactly the same and all employees work exactly the same.

Eric Peters, Air Dispersion Modeler
New Mexico Environment Department / Air Quality Bureau
525 Camino de Los Marquez - Suite 1 / Santa Fe, NM, 87505
Phone: 505-629-5299
E-mail: eric.peters@env.nm.gov
www.env.nm.gov

Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO

From: Schath, Brian, ENV
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2022 3:31 PM
To: Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO
Subject: Devasted on Telework Decision

Hi Denise,

Below please find my comment on SPOs decision to rescind the telework agreement for state employees.

BEGIN COMMENT

I take pride in being a public servant. I do not think many people would take a job in the public sector that pays 10's of thousands of dollars less than their private sector counterparts without feeling they were making a legitimate difference in the lives of their fellow New Mexicans. I am 27 years old and have had the fortune of working on some amazing projects for the people of this State, including the development of the hydrogen economy here in New Mexico.

Along with public service, another reason I committed to working for the State of New Mexico are the benefits and perks. For me, one of the greatest benefits has been telework. There are a multitude of reasons telework helps employees with their work. Personally, obtaining an ideal work-life balance, increasing both efficiency and proficiency, as well as working from home during cold and flu season (therefore minimizing my risk of infection), are all reasons that I value telework. I think it is also important to note, that I easily work more hours in a pay period and get more work done because telework allows me to do so.

SPO's sudden announcement to end telework has been devastating to me both mentally and emotionally. I love my job and the folks I work with. I am passionate about my department and my projects. I wanted to make a life-long career here, but I am not compromising my work life balance, or the other reasons I listed above, and returning to the office full time.

I hope you re-instate telework for the folks that will choose to stay, but I personally feel conflicted about continuing to work for anyone who blatantly chooses to not consider the workers that are already overworked and underpaid. I feel the rescinding of the telework policy is a slap in the face of the folks who already give so much to the Land of Enchantment. Why were none of us asked what we think? Why did you not hold an all-hands meeting to gather input? There were so many opportunities for y'all to make this process actually work and gather input from the folks who are most impacted by this decision. Why did you not? You're either fools or cowards. Regardless, I wish the best for the state employees.

May the sun continue to shine on New Mexico.

- Brian Schath, New Mexico Environment Department - Climate Change Bureau

END COMMENT

Thanks,

Brian Schath
Environmental Analyst
NMED Climate Change Bureau
Phone: 505-629-5025

Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO

From: Zeigler, Meredith, ENV
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2022 3:38 PM
To: Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO
Subject: SPO Board Meeting General Public Comment (Agenda Item II)

Name: Meredith Zeigler

Contact: meredith.zeigler@env.nm.gov; 505-490-5866

Agenda Item II, General Public Comment

Good morning SPO board. My name is Meredith Zeigler and I work at New Mexico Environment Department. My comment is regarding SPO's recent and sudden retraction of the telework policy allowing state employees to work remotely with their supervisor's approval. This feels like more than just a hasty policy reversal; it feels like my colleagues and I are being told we are simply not trusted to do our work outside a cubicle anymore, no matter our work ethic and job duties. As an environmental data analyst, I am not in a public facing position and there are many positions in the state like mine. My supervisor would tell you I am a model employee and that telework if anything has increased my productivity.

Telework is a prudent setup for the job duties I perform but I also have personal reasons for desiring a telework arrangement. I have a young child and I planned my family around the agreement that I would be able to telework at least part-time to navigate the challenge of childcare. Telework has made it possible to have a family while still working full-time because childcare services are not available in my area that span an 8-hour workday plus commute time. I now have to scramble to find extra childcare (at great expense) with less than a month notice. Telework also allows me to balance my role as a full-time working parent with that of a present parent. Those hundreds of hours of commuting per year is time I now spend taking my son for walks at the park.

The current telework policy allows for flexibility and consideration of case-by-case basis in-person needs. Any lapse in customer service should be enforced at the supervisor and upper management level, not by a blanket reversal of a policy affecting thousands of employees. A policy reversal will not increase workplace productivity because the state is already chronically understaffed. I implore you to spend the time to enact a thoughtful telework policy that considers the nuance of different job duties and employee performance. This blanket policy reversal does not serve New Mexico state employees nor the New Mexicans they serve. Thank you.

From: [Hurst, Linsey, ENV](#)
To: [Forlizzi, Denise M, SPO](#)
Cc: linsey.hurst@cwa7076.org
Subject: General Public Comments for December 9, 2022 SPO Board Meeting
Date: Thursday, December 08, 2022 8:23:35 AM
Attachments: [image001.gif](#)
[Letter report_248254_20221205_1948.dotx](#)
[image003.png](#)

Good Morning,

I am submitting public comments under my name, Linsey Hurst, in my union capacity, on behalf of state employees and their families regarding *Agenda Item II. General Public Comment* for the December 9, 2022, SPO Board Meeting, per the instructions provided. Each comment provided by each state employee or family member is separated by a short line in the attached word document. We estimate that each comment can be read within the 2 minutes time frame. My contact information is provided below. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns with our submission.

[Public comment on agenda items can be made in person or by emailing your comment to DeniseM.Forlizzi@spo.nm.gov by 5:00 p.m. December 8, 2022. Email comments must include the commenter's name and contact information, the agenda item being commented on, and take no longer than 2 minutes to read, as they will be spoken into the record by the board administrator during the public comment portion of the meeting.]

Email sent in my union capacity.

Thank you,

Linsey Hurst
CWA Agency VP · Steward
NM Environment Department
(505) 470-4007/ linsey.hurst@cwa7076.org
she · her · hers
[Become a member today!](#)

I've been working with the State of NM for over 12 years and during that time I have started a family, moved twice, changed offices, went back to school all while moving up the corporate ladder. As a single mother now and the only bread winner for my kids it became rather difficult for me to be in all the places, I needed to be all the time. Running from work to school pickup, soccer games, orchestra practice, football practice, softball practice and still coming home to cook, clean and get ready for the next day became exhausting. When we were forced to move home because of Covid I was worried that my kids and myself would have to struggle and things would not be the same for us, but at least we had more time to spend with each other until things went back to normal (hoping). In the time that I have been home, I have been more present with my kids while still getting my work completed and done in a timely manner. I have received kudos on my work performances and have been congratulated by various team members for taking a step above and helping other departments. I have noticed my mental health has greatly improved, I've been able to breath and not stress out as much. I have taken more time to be present with my kids and I have not had to call in sick to stay home and take care of them. I can still work while tending to my kids. Honestly that has been the best thing. Not feeling like crap because I had to take time off of work for a personal concern and then worrying about how this effects my work the following day. I can maintain both and still get my job done and even better. I have told many community members I have enjoyed these last few years of working with the state teleworking then I have in the many years ever before. I feel like I accomplish more because YOU GUYS CARED. It's like the saying "you take care of me, I'll take care of you", and I honestly felt like that. I can be a great state employee but still be a great mom without stressing myself out. I can help out whenever I need assistance with other departments or my own and still feel proud to have accomplished so much. When the word got out that we were being told to go back to the office five days a week, I honestly felt defeated. Why did I work so hard to prove to you we could do this even better by teleworking for you to just take it away because you need us in the office to watch us five days a week. Why? I feel like this is all because of power to control and micromanage. I know my fellow co-workers have all felt the same. We all busted our butts for years to show you that we could do the job and yet it still didn't work. Because of this concern I have started to look for other teleworking jobs to ensure my life can remain the same and be appreciated for the hard work I have to put forward. I have been a firm believer that you don't leave a job for the job, you leave the job because of the Boss, and if that Boss doesn't see all the hard work you have contributed to the company, you find a BOSS who will.

Look I understand the State is a different entity and you can advertise for new employees all the time, but why not keep the ones that have been here for years helping you become a better state that want to be here. The ones who devoted their lives to helping our community run and the ones who live here trying to make a difference. We can look at the pros and cons of what the benefits are for both, but in the end, if you don't have employees to help make the state run because YOU don't want to comprise anymore then really you are going to lose a lot of great employees. Plus, why fix something that wasn't broken for two and a half years. We have proven to you we can do the work and get things done while not being in the office 24/7. Honestly, I don't want to leave the state but if I have too for the benefits of my family I will, and I know many others that will as well. Please keep that in mind. YOUR EMPLOYEES DON'T WANT TO LEAVE BECAUSE THEY HATE THE JOB, THEY WILL LEAVE BECAUSE THEY FELT THEIR EMPLOYER DIDN'T CARE ENOUGH TO KEEP THEM.

Good Morning,

I am writing to express my concern about and opposition to the blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy. With the numbers of COVID, flu and RSV hitting record numbers in New Mexico, it is a very bad decision to send all state workers back to the office in the winter when these types of illnesses are historically high. In addition, many of us live with immunocompromised relatives or housemates that we are very fearful of infecting if we bring any of these diseases home with us.

I, for one, will be one of those workers quitting should the telework policy be canceled.

STO

With a telework option available I am able to remain close enough to my infant daughter's preschool that I am able to go in to breastfeed her and help put her down for a nap on my lunch break. If I were to return to the office full time this would not be an option for me as I would be too far away to make that arrangement work on my hour-long lunch break. As a full-time working mother, the time telework has afforded me to spend with my child while keeping a full-time job has been invaluable, it has made the choice to remain in the workforce after giving birth a much easier decision. I plan to continue to grow my family and I hope that I am afforded the same opportunity with future children. If I were to be forced back into the office full-time, I would have to seriously consider leaving the state workforce. That decision would be a very difficult one for me as I have worked very hard for my career, but when it comes down to it, I will always put my children's well-being above my own desires and aspirations.

Telework has also benefited my program. I work with a very small team that consists of four team members. Each of us are individually specialized to meet the needs of our specific roles. When my daughter is too ill to attend preschool or there is a COVID classroom closure, which on average is once a month, telework has allowed me to work from home at least half day and/or on off hours when my partner is home from work and can take over caretaking duties. My partner is a healthcare provider, due to the shortage of providers statewide and the healthcare needs of our community he is almost always unable to take off work to care for our daughter when she is ill, which leaves the burden of childcare directly on my shoulders. With a telework option, I am able to respond to urgent programmatic needs while also caring for my child. This has prevented my team from becoming overburdened by the need to cover for me, on top of their normal duties, while I am out taking care of a sick child. For perspective, my position accounts for 1/4 of the work completed daily to keep our program running. Losing a 1/4 of your team, even for a couple days, can put a tremendous strain on the remaining team members. I am aware that not all positions can be completed from home, but when it is a viable option, I see no reason why it should be revoked.

In my case, I have been teleworking for my entire career of 21 years. The staffing for my team just does not have the positions to cover every facility we support. And even with staff covering, I still get called to support other facilities then my own. I do not travel there, so have to do it via Telework.

The decision to cancel the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy will significantly affect my family in numerous ways, the most being financially. It will affect my family financially, as we are already having a hard time as Childcare is expensive (cost more than half of what I make a month) and unfortunately we do not qualify for any Childcare Assistance. If teleworking is cancelled, that means I will have to put them on a waitlist in order to attend Childcare all week, which will mean more money I don't have. I already feel like I am working to pay for Childcare, which is ridiculous. I really love my job and being able to help the community and provide resources, but it is unfortunate as a State Employee, I do not qualify for any of these resources. My family is my first priority, and if it comes down to cancelling the telework policy, it only makes sense to look at other job opportunities that will pay more and allow me to work from home. I know that I am not the only State Employee having to weigh out these options and struggling to make ends meet as this is impacting all of us.

I along with several other employees have been doing our job teleworking since the beginning of the Pandemic and have been doing our job without an issue, and honestly have been able to reach out to more people and enroll more people in our specific program since being able to offer services over the phone versus in person. And even now that we are able to allow in person appointments, clients still prefer over the phone and honestly if we take this away our numbers will go down drastically.

This is why

My fellow state workers and I deserve a telework policy that works.

I understand that the State has an onerous physical footprint that requires funding for operations and management. However, the need for State employees to physically report to a duty station is an artifact of previous generations. Allowing telework for State employees was an innovation and revelation out of necessity during the pandemic, but now it is an asset that the State should leverage to retain current employees and recruit early-career professionals that expect work / life balance measures such as optional telework and flexible work schedules. Please review the results of NMED's annual Employee Engagement Surveys, which quantify and express the efficacy of NMED employees who telework and exhibit the increase in workplace satisfaction that telework provides.

For the sake of all New Mexicans, reverse this decision.

Good morning, on the subject of teleworking, I am going to assume (I know...) that others have voiced this concern, but just in case no one has, here's my few cents worth.

I, and several co-workers, have a chronic illness that does (at times) affect my physical wellbeing, but perhaps does not affect my overall capabilities to be a productive employee. For instance, during COVID I was diagnosed with diabetes. I am also an epileptic. Both conditions are under careful and effective management and I'm doing well. Teleworking means that on an "off" day I do not have to rise as early, I do not have to fuss about dressing, I have access to my own kitchen and food, a support care person if needed, and my environment is quiet.

For those of us with underlying medical conditions, teleworking should be seen as a reasonable accommodation that is already in place negating the need to apply for accommodation. And most of us have proven (during COVID) that teleworking is a viable way for us to stay productive and contributing to the work force and our agreements with our HR departments are supported for continuation by our performance during COVID. To date, I have not asked for telework as an accommodation for a disability. The current agreement allows for teleworking, and I have left it at that. The flexibility has been part of my overall job satisfaction rate which at the moment is moderate to high. I love my job.

Although I am committed to this job fellow co-workers have expressed a desire to quit and find a job that they can telework from. I fear the vacancy rate will only increase. A hybrid telework model is a great selling point to get good quality people to work for us.

For the sake of all New Mexicans, please consider other options than a blanket cancellation.

I am a 66 year old woman who has worked for the State since 2001.

I currently telework. My work entails data management and working in an office atmosphere is distracting .

By working from home I have saved money, and wear and tear on my car (and myself).

With the new strains of respiratory diseases moving through the country I am also concerned about the close quarters we have to keep in the State buildings. I lost two family members to Covid so I understand those risks.

We have worked from home for almost three years and proven that we are capable of holding down the fort from anywhere we are. My family has made adjustments to me working from home. Such as my husband becoming employed and my children attending a cyber academy where they only attend two days a week and work from home three days a week. As a state employee I work for retirement and benefits. The retirement is getting worse every year and the benefits are following suit. Telework has become a benefit that should continue for those that are capable of working from home.

In my case, I have been teleworking for my entire career of 21 years. The staffing for my team just does not have the positions to cover every facility we support. And even with staff covering, I still get called to support other facilities than my own. I do not travel there, so have to do it via Telework.

The decision to cancel the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy will significantly affect my family in numerous ways, the most being financially. It will affect my family financially, as we are already having a hard time as Childcare is expensive (cost more than half of what I make a month) and unfortunately we do not qualify for any Childcare Assistance. If teleworking is cancelled, that means I will have to put them on a waitlist in order to attend Childcare all week, which will mean more money I don't have. I already feel like I am working to pay for Childcare, which is ridiculous. I really love my job and being able to help the community and provide resources, but it is unfortunate as a State Employee, I do not qualify for any of these resources. My family is my first priority, and if it comes down to cancelling the telework policy, it only makes sense to look at other job opportunities that will pay more and allow me to work from home. I know that I am not the only State Employee having to weigh out these options and struggling to make ends meet as this is impacting all of us.

I along with several other employees have been doing our job teleworking since the beginning of the Pandemic and have been doing our job without an issue, and honestly have been able to reach out to more people and enroll more people in our specific program since being able to offer services over the phone versus in person. And even now that we are able to allow in person appointments, clients still prefer over the phone and honestly if we take this away our numbers will go down drastically.

This is why

Many other employers in the state offer higher pay, better benefits, and teleworking.

I work for NMED-GWQB and we are currently around a 50% vacancy rate. Everyone in GWQB is doing the work of 2-3 people for technical positions that were already difficult to fill in a underfunded and underappreciated Bureau. Take away the ability to telework and expect mass resignations of more NMED staff. I've been with GWQB for 6 years. This makes me one of the longer tenured members in GWQB, but I'm willing to resign rather than being forced to return to office.

To Whom it may concern,

My fellow state workers and I deserve to work in an environment that is flexible and professional, we need a telework policy that works!

This will not happen if you rescind telework. We are overworked, filling in for our coworkers who have left, and are underpaid for the work we already do! Canceling telework is only going to make this issue worse and lead to more people quitting, such as myself. I am a valuable asset to my department and division and will need if I am not given the flexibility I need and deserve.

Hello Representatives, SPO administrators, and Governor/Executive Branch staff,

I am writing to provide another voice in opposition to the blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy.

New Mexico State Government, particularly New Mexico Department of Health, has chronically had issues with keeping current staff and recruiting new staff. Many bureaus have high vacancy rates, leading to remaining staff being overworked, and underpaid for the work we already do. Many other employers in the state -not to mention other state governments and the federal government- offer higher pay, better benefits, and teleworking options.

New Mexico state employees have demonstrated their effectiveness at working during the early stages of COVID-19 pandemic and continue to do so now. Other employers -again, including state and federal government- have maintained teleworking policies without detriment to their goals. Removal of this perk is non-sensical

and counter-productive, likely leading to lower morale if not outright departures of current employees and even lower capacity for the State to recruit new ones.

As an IT Systems Admin III and a Disabled Person I get more work done remotely than having to drive from Albuquerque to Santa Fe! IT Staff working remote, we get online earlier and stay later as needed as well as provide better service while on a secure remote connection to our networks!

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Teleworking has meant the world to me and my ability to be a mother and work full-time. Life is pretty tough for teenagers these days. My teenagers have experienced the tragic suicide of a best friend and the attempted suicide by someone in their circle this Fall. It's really helped them to have me be around physically in the home before and after school.

For some folks, being in a quiet home setting really increases their organization and productivity. I really thrive on not having office distractions.

It would be nice if folks could look at the Environment Department in a different light from the State as a whole. As recent news items highlight, the technical staff and managers at NMED frequently leave for higher paying opportunities at the labs. Flexibility by means of teleworking is one incentive with which NMED could compete for the short supply of technical staff available.

Sadly, I think we could see a lot of earlier-than-planned retirements for some valuable employees that might have stayed a lot longer if they could continue teleworking.

It seems like wasted resources since many folks now have two sets of desks, chairs, computers, etc.

I know that affording gas for many will be an issue, especially since so many workers live outside of expensive Santa Fe.

I am also concerned about my health. My family has all had RSV and I certainly don't want to spread this or get Covid. I have a heart condition so appreciate the ability to stay away from germs in the office.

Couldn't we save money by concentrating everyone who wants to be in the office at Runnels? And, if you really insist that everyone come in, could you let folks share office space there and only come in 1 day a week? Someone would always be around for our constituencies in this way.

Thank you for listening.

Canceling telework is only going to make this issue worse and lead to more people quitting—myself included. I am actively looking for a new job right now, and there is no redundancy in my position, so when I leave it will put my unique and specialized workload in the laps of folks who have no experience doing what I do. Further, the state should already be embarrassed by how little it pays me (it's absolutely impossible to survive in Santa Fe on my tiny paycheck, and private-sector pay for my position is 50-100% more than what I make now)—so especially after this telework decision, I have no qualms leaving New Mexico entirely to better meet my financial needs.

We were forced into this situation by a global pandemic and had to adapt our lives to this for close to 3 years and in one month you want to just take it away and restructure our lives. It is not fair to your employees that you can use telework to the states convenience (Snow Days, Construction being done Etc.) but wont allow it for employees convenience this makes employees feel very undervalued.

I have zero face-to-face interaction with the public in my job duties. Even before the pandemic, all my work was done over the phone or computer. It is completely arbitrary to make me drive 30-60 mins (depending on where

I'm placed) to use a phone and computer in a different building when I've proven for nearly 3 years that I can use a phone and computer just as well in my own home. Although I already make less than I would in another state or in the private sector, I will have to spend my own money on the now-frivolous costs of gas/transportation and hired care for my pets each day, who I'd be leaving alone for potentially up to 10-11 hours a day just because the state has to justify the cost of the buildings it leased pre-pandemic.

The pandemic shifted work culture for all of us, and many of us have realized and proven that we don't actually need to come into an office to perform our job and serve New Mexicans well. It is a poorly-thought-out, knee-jerk decision to make everyone return to that old tradition for the sake of justifying the cost of state buildings. Evolve with the times, recognize that your current and potential job force will be turned away by enforced commutes when few competitors enforce the same, and use this recent culture shift to justify scaling down the office property owned by the state.

None of us work for the state for the money. We work here because we know our work matters. But that only goes so far, and this will be the last straw that causes even more talented, highly skilled, underpaid people to leave increasingly hard-to-fill vacant positions in their wake.

If you truly value our capacity to serve New Mexicans, please reverse this decision.

Hello,

I was hired by the State of NM after the telework policy began and strongly believe that it should be turned into a permanent option for applicable state employees. I work on IT cloud services and do not have a public-facing position. I have found that MS Teams is a great tool for collaborating with my coworkers and do not miss the interruptions that come with working in an office environment.

I have a young child. Working remotely, I have been able to spend more time with my family and it has allowed us to avoid paying for childcare. With my current schedule, my daughter can play sports, dance, and attend other activities, rather than sitting for hours in after-care. The flexibility that teleworking provides makes it acceptable to me that my salary is lower than it would be with other organizations.

Teleworking boosts productivity. Twice, I've had to pick up my daughter from school because she was sick. I took my lunch break, picked her up, put her to bed, and went back to work. In a traditional office environment, I would have missed the rest of the day. I've also fallen sick myself and worked from home when I would have called in otherwise.

I was involved with a major cloud migration project where I had to work after-hours and over weekends for months. This would have been almost untenable if I'd needed to work from the office, but doing it from home made it acceptable. The project was a success and to this day our department is the only one that's managed to pull it off 'in-house'. The contractor's quote was \$225,000.

I have personally heard 3 senior IT professionals promise retirement if the teleworking policy ends. Since I began, nearly all of our senior management has transferred or retired, and I have to wonder if those remaining understand how many plates the people working under them have kept spinning. It would be a serious blow to both our team's morale, our capacity, and our capabilities if these senior members left.

Please support state workers by supporting telework.

My division in the PED has been fully staffed for almost a year, only because employees have been able to work from home. I have coworkers who live in Las Cruces, for example, who have no interest in moving to Santa Fe or Albuquerque due to the high cost of purchasing a home (if they are even able to find a home for sale). Other coworkers who live in Rio Rancho do not wish to waste 2+ hours commuting every day. I imagine the opportunity to telework has also been advantageous to many folks who live in rural areas throughout New Mexico, where work can be difficult to come by. For the PED, I think allowing people from various parts of the state to work with-

in the agency only enhances what we try to achieve, because we here from folks who live in the communities we are trying to support.

Canceling telework is only going to make the vacancy issue worse and lead to more people quitting. I bet the work of the PED would almost come to a complete halt if teleworking is no longer allowed -- an unfortunate situation for the state of New Mexico given the need to address the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit.

In my own case, teleworking has afforded me the opportunity to be near my two-year-old child when my mother-in-law and mother look after her in my home for two days a week. My mother is 73 years old, and though she is capable of looking after my daughter by herself, sometimes she needs assistance. Luckily, I have been nearby because I work from home! For parents of young children, perhaps mothers of young children especially, teleworking has been a blessing because of the flexibility it provides.

With the change in policy, employees will be affected economically in a variety of ways. Currently, my spouse and I share a vehicle. He is required to work in person. When I must work in person, which is an occasional requirement of my job, we plan accordingly so we can get to where we need to be. However, if I am required to work in person full time, we will need to purchase another vehicle, which will be an additional burden for us, likely, given the cost of cars right now.

Please reverse this decision. I understand that employees must be held accountable, and there are ways to hold us to high standards without rescinding the telework policy. Please accept that the pandemic changed the way people in the 21st century labor on behalf of the government and collaborate with the union to develop a plan that works for folks. If the state is worried about how paying millions of dollars for empty office space looks, then maybe the state should consider turning those buildings into shelters for unhoused people, health clinics, or affordable housing. There are people who could use it. Let's be creative as we work to meet the needs of communities throughout New Mexico. We can do it!

We were forced into this situation by a global pandemic and had to adapt our lives to this for close to 3 years and in one month you want to just take it away and restructure our lives. It is not fair to your employees that you can use telework to the States convenience (Snow Days, Construction being done Etc.) but won't allow it for employee's convenience this makes employees feel very undervalued and underappreciated. We are not only your employees but your constituents please listen to our voices.

I work for PED and live in Las Cruces. I was hired with the understanding that I was NOT willing to move my family to northern New Mexico and was told by my Director that a Las Cruces office would be opened if we needed to work from an office. I am a single mom with three children, and canceling the Telework Policy will negatively impact my family, financial well-being, and career supporting New Mexico education.

Additionally, my position requires me to provide direct support to the southeast quadrant of the state (Alamogordo, Carlsbad, Hobbs, Roswell, Artesia, etc.), which is much easier for me to accomplish from Las Cruces. I am executing all aspects of my job, in addition to the other duties that I am asked to complete due to staffing shortages from home, with a high level of performance. How can PED support ALL school districts in New Mexico from Santa Fe? Why would the state want to limit the talent pool hired to address the Martinez/Yazzie lawsuit to those who live within a small radius of the state and do not represent the diverse NM communities?

With the current staffing, will you terminate employees who can not report to Santa Fe? That is not beneficial to the employees who have worked so diligently for the state of New Mexico or the students we are working so hard to support.

Hello, NM State Leaders:

I am writing this letter to share my opposition to the blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy. With this current policy I have been able to support districts/ charter schools across New Mexico from Las Cru-

ces, NM. Living in Las Cruces is not only the best option for me at this time because I have my family and support system, but it also is more affordable, and it provides me the opportunity and validity to continue performing this work with solely my income. Rescinding the telework agreement would force me to move up north, leave my family, and cause financial strains in my life. This decision will highly likely cause me to leave the New Mexico Public Education Department in search for another job.

Please reconsider this decision once more. There has to be more creative ways to further increase recruitment and retention in state employees. I thoroughly have enjoyed serving New Mexicans and school communities, but if in the end I have to choose between my family and my financial stability, I will have no choice but to walk away.

My personal impacts:

1. I am eligible to retire. I had a date in mind toward the end of 2023, but will now submit the PERA package as soon as possible. My mental health has improved dramatically over the past 3 years working from home and I can't give that up.
2. I have signed a contract for major renovation to my property. Though I could keep working during the construction, I need to be here to make sure they dig in the right places, etc, meaning I'll have to use my leave time in a way I had not planned on. I would have waited until retirement if I knew.
3. I bought a \$600 ski pass this year. Commuting for 5 hours every week will use up my free time so that I will get less use out of the pass and would not have bought it if I knew.
4. Though I do not have children, I feel for my colleagues with school-age kids, many of whose spouses also work for the state. They have the month of December, with holiday plans already made, to scramble for child care options.
5. We have proved that we can fulfill our responsibilities in a productive manner while working remotely. Why are you punishing us for our success?!?
6. My "7% raise" this year amounted to a 4% increase in take-home pay after taxes and other deductions. Once again, poorer relative to inflation. Now I will spend an additional 5 hours of my time driving to Santa Fe. It just keeps getting worse.

Please note:

Cancellation of all telework will cause people to quit State of NM jobs and cause people who might apply to avoid working for the State. Instead of a total cancellation, case-by-case consideration is a better option. I understand, for instance, that an operator of heavy machinery may not need a telework option. For other professions, being in a certain location may not be important. These are the natures of different jobs and should be understood by all.

If there is a fear of purposeful abuse of the telework option, it would be better to punish the offenders and not hamstring an entire workforce. Just because it is easier for management to pass a "blanket ruling" does not make it necessarily better.

If truancy, laziness, or incompetence are a problem, if there is need for streamlining within a workflow, etc., these issues should be dealt with on an individual basis.

Perhaps a COMPLETE study of the State of NM's operations is in order. AN OUTSIDE AUDIT to determine, for telework and ALL PROCESSES:

Where are the limitations? Where are the problems? Which modes of working are better suited to telework? Is there institutionalized inefficiency? Are workers safe, paid competitive wages, and are they satisfied with their jobs?

Other states do a MUCH better job than does our State in many areas. How do they do it? (Sorry - no data form me here as strong substantiation at this point. I am sure an easy search could be done for "states with best pay with respect to general industry and how telework functions withing these states" (or something close.)

Thanks for your time. Expect to see increased vacancies in State positions if the blanket ban occurs. This is a "one size fits all" solution.

I was in a private office and recently moved to a cubicle, I am in the office reviewing documents most of my day and I cannot concentrate. I'm at a bureau chiefs pay band and supervise 5 staff statewide, I do not feel I can do my job in this environment part time or full time in the office, I can get more done at home with privacy and w/o disruption. I'm working to start my own LLC as I don't feel this is manageable. The staff I supervise have to commute to work and it will take time away from their families, I surmise a rise in sick and FMLA leave again as they cannot manage the demands of the super allocation with their commute, home and medical conditions, the cubicles make their autoimmune issues more unsafe.

To Whom it may Concern:

The ability to telework changed my quality of life as I had been previously commuting to Santa Fe from Albuquerque 5 days a week. I am now able to maintain a better work/family balance. Instead of 2 plus hours of commuting I am able to focus more on my job duties and jump right into working from my home office. When my work day is done I am immediately available for my family.

Not being in the office has cut down on distractions and I am better able to focus on my tasks. I am MORE productive and have produced MORE work product while teleworking. It will also be a financial hardship if I have to pay for gas to commute to Santa Fe 5 days a week. I agree with Linsey Hurst, and for me it would not be a sustainable situation if I am forced back into the office. I have had other job opportunities offered to me within the Albuquerque metro area but I am a dedicated NMED Drinking Water Bureau manager and believe strongly in our mission to keep the State of New Mexico's drinking water safe for all citizens. I love the job I do, and the entire team I work with is passionate about what we do as state employees. Our bureau continues to prove that telework can be a successful option for state employees as we have been productive and efficient ever since we were sent home in March 2020 due to the pandemic.

Thank you

I recently moved further away from the office, so I am already spending more on gas than I used to even before coming in to work every day. I don't have control over the temperature in my office, so it is always freezing. I use plug-in heated gloves so that my hands stay warm enough to keep typing. I appreciate my days at home where I can control my environment and it helps me feel less distracted and more productive and keeps me more within my budget goals.

I am opposed to the blanket cancellation for several reasons: first, my own health is at stake if I am forced to return to the office where I am more readily exposed to the virus.

Second, my family have three children that needs care and we do not want to put them in childcare due to the increased exposure this would bring. My family alternate care based on our scheduled and altering our telework schedule would cause all children to be forced into situations where expose to Covid 19 is increased, which means all family members are at risk of contracting and passing the virus amongst our family.

Third, due to the pandemic, my workload has not decreased, it has increased, and my coworkers and I have been able to handle the increase, meeting and exceeding management's expectations. Our division has made positive changes to reflect and document the work we are completing through the use of Smartsheet and weekly regional meetings and monthly statewide meetings. Management has repeatedly stated they are satisfied with

the increase of productivity and have given many Kudos for the work we have accomplished in almost three years.

A blanket cancellation of telework will significantly impact me. While I started working in-office before the pandemic, I am not in the same situation I was then as many other New Mexicans. And with telework, I've increased my caretaker duties without a three-hour commute eating more my day. During the Calf Canyon fire, I was responsible for caretaking for my grandmother-in-law. Without telework, I would have had to pay for extra hours to have her covered due to my RailRunner commute. I could focus on serving New Mexicans as a public health worker during work hours. And in my off-hours, I could fulfill my family duties.

According to the Legislative Finance Committee evaluation, epidemiologists have the second highest vacancy rate at 40%. And now many are looking elsewhere for employment if the state removes telework. We quickly pivoted for the pandemic response to serve our community. Unfortunately, many of us are burned out and quitting. Public health workers are leaving the field, which is stated in most all-staff meetings by Dr. Scrase based on CDC and PHWINS data. Many of us have been able to respond to the pandemic while fulfilling grant measures. Should we not be appreciated and valued more after showing up for New Mexico? Removing telework will push us further over the edge at a time when we need public health surveillance and response.

Telework should be based on the mission, operational tempo, and be agency specific. Obviously, rules are needed and those should be negotiated between stake holders for accountability of the employee and SoNM.

I know of at least 5 people who have left or in the process of leaving for companies that provide 100% telework. I work in an agency that turnover rate and vacancies are high and I'm currently assisting with filling in those positions. Telework allows me to work with less stress as I handle additional duties assigned due to vacant positions within my agency. With teleworking I do not have to worry about the commute to and from the office and it allows me to start assigned task earlier or later in order to meet deadlines. I am closer to my child's school so if there is an emergency that arises, I am there in a few minutes.

Our children are healthier, happier, and smarter being at home, we are healthier being at home and our family thrives. Let the directors decide what's best for their own individual departments and bureaus. We have proved we can do our jobs from home. Do not let a few bad apples draw your attention away from the benefits to state employee lives.

Please think about working moms!

I have been working from home since covid a couple years ago. I live alone and prefer to continue working from home as I am almost 65 years old and care for my 86 year old mother on the weekends. I feel so much more productive working from a quiet home office and also feel safer because I only go out on weekends and that's to help my mother. Because I work from home, I feel very comfortable knowing I'm staying healthy and helping my mother also. I have a quiet, home office that I am not interrupted, etc as in the office. I also have had no reason in the last 2 1/2 years to go in. My work does not interact with the public and also I meet with coworkers by TEAMS or other means. My work is all mostly data entry. There is no reason for me to be in an office. I have been with the State of NM for almost 24 years and the fact that I may have to go in is having me think about retiring earlier than I wanted.

Thank you

My wife, a state worker, deserves this opportunity.

If their supervisors are ok with telework then it should be up to them to decide. How can SPO make this determination without the involvement of leadership from every agency? Some state agencies do not even have office space. Our kids are healthier, our home life is better, and we are healthier being able to work from home even with a hybrid schedule. It's what works best for every New Mexican. We are part of New Mexico too and we deserve to be taken care of.

For the sake of all New Mexicans including children and families of state workers, reverse this decision! Do not make us return to a world where "work" and "office" is the place we spend all our time. I do not want my wife coming home at 5, our infant goes to sleep at 6. She will only spend an hour with him. That's not fair.

I am a former state employee who worked 100% from home until my grant funding ran out last month. I felt that I have never been as productive as when I worked from home. When 8 AM hit I was ready to work and not frazzled from a commute. I had few distractions, and was able to still maintain strong relationships with coworkers through Microsoft Teams. I understand that some state legislators feel that empty buildings are a waste of money, but a solution to that shouldn't be to make state employees less productive.

I am also concerned about retention of state employees. I had intended to apply for another state position, but with this change I can't see myself getting a job with the state where I can feel like I am being productive and maintaining a quality of life. Furthermore, as a believer in the governor's efforts to fight climate change, I just don't see myself spending my commute time warming the earth's atmosphere, especially for something that can be done from home.

I think that the Lujan Grisham administration should focus on keeping current staff and recruit new staff to fill empty positions.

I see no benefit to the state for this position. This seems like a political decision meant to appease conservative lawmakers who were opposed to anything COVID-19 related. The cancellation of working from home is a needless blow to the efficiency of state government.

On a personal level, as a divorced parent of three, having had the non-mandatory telework agreement in place has helped our family immensely by reducing the amount of money spent on gas when I had to drive to and from work and when I had to leave work during the day to pick up my children to take them to their medical and dental appointments. Being able to telework has also reduced the amount of time spent away from my job because I no longer have to leave work first to pick them up from home, take them to their appointments and return them home before I can return back to work to finish my work day. I have been able to reduce my use of accrued sick leave and annual leave because I no longer need additional time to shuttle from work to home to pick up children to take them to and from their appointments. In addition to this benefit, being able to telework has allowed me to concentrate fully on my work without the normal distractions and interruptions of fellow co-workers' phone discussions, visits with other workers, consultants etc, which were constant when I was working in a cubicle environment. These are some of the benefits of teleworking that have allowed me to be a more productive worker over each 8 hour work-day.

If the state cancels employees' ability to telework, it will have tremendous repercussions across all Departments. Departments have already begun downsizing office spaces and making plans to consolidate workspaces to save New Mexico money, reduce expenditure on unnecessary offices, and increase employee retention rates. Reducing the required office space will save New Mexico taxpayer dollars, and allow the budgets to pay for necessary tools, vehicles, training, and new hires instead of cubicles.

The commute to and from work is dangerous. Every day there are accidents on Cerrillos Road and its major arterials. Albuquerque is rife with traffic accidents. Employees are engaging in needless risk to go sit in an office arbitrarily, where the same work can easily be accomplished from the safety and comfort of their own home,

without paying rent for offices. Digitalization of paperwork will reduce waste, protect the environment, and reduce cost on printers and other office supplies.

Many employees have children, and childcare costs are prohibitively expensive. There is a months-long waiting list for every childcare center in Albuquerque. Fuel costs have recently been decreasing, but they will absolutely raise in price eventually. Fuel that is polluting the environment, when the state wants to push for electric vehicles (that it doesn't have the infrastructure for yet). Reduce waste. Keep telework.

My fellow state workers and I deserve a telework policy that works. Personal costs increase as we return to the office full time - gas from driving to and from work, childcare, food costs and more.

Some employees are overworked, filling in for our coworkers who have left, with most employees underpaid for the work we already do.

Canceling telework will make this issue worse and lead to more people quitting. SPO needs to address a 25% vacancy rate. Taking away yet another benefit will not help solve this problem.

Kindly reverse this decision.

DCA

I personally know 5 current NM state employees (supervisors and rank & file staff) who will either retire early or quit their position if the non-mandatory telework policy is cancelled. The result will be an unmanageable workload for any employees who remain. This will translate into a further deterioration of assistance & customer service for the residents of New Mexico. I implore you, PLEASE DON'T REVOKE THE NON-MANDATORY TELEWORK POLICY.

I am a native New Mexican who takes great pride in serving the people of my home state. The work I do is important, I am a skilled and valued employee. However, remaining in this position has become more and more untenable. Wages and benefits have not kept pace with the cost of living nor the private sector. Santa Fe, where the majority of state offices are located, is unaffordable for most New Mexicans. Make no mistake, rescinding telework is a PAY CUT for state workers. With the cost of commuting, and the scarcity of childcare and particularly aftercare, the state is asking its workforce to shoulder undue burdens on resources and budgets that are already stretched thin.

Sadly many workers, myself included, will conclude that working for the state is not feasible. We will look to the private sector, and likely to other states. It pains me that I may not be able to raise my daughter in the home and culture that I know and love. Please reconsider this decision, let's continue to move New Mexico into the future by not clinging to the costly and inefficient workplaces of the past.

In addition to the excellent points that have been brought up by the union about vacancies, potential for a mass resignation of employees, and making state positions less competitive, I would like to add that rescinding telework places a huge burden on state employees who commute, financially, physically, and emotionally.

The cost of living in Santa Fe is too high to be able to afford to live in Santa Fe on a state salary, even with a partner, so state employees such as myself must commute from outside of Santa Fe. I personally commute from Albuquerque, an hour at the very least (more if there is an accident or a lot of traffic) each way. This turns my 8 am-5 pm job into a 6:30 am-6:30 pm job. The physical and emotional toll having to commute 5 days a week imposes is huge. If I go to bed at a reasonable time to get enough sleep to be rested for the next day, that leaves me only about 3 hours to do daily household chores, cook and clean up to feed myself, and see to personal responsibilities. That does not leave much, if any, time to rest or to make plans with friends and family. Not all of this can be done on the weekends either, and trying to do so means that there is actually no downtime for those

of us who commute, no "days off" if you will. This is stressful and takes a great toll on physical and mental health. It does not take long for burnout to occur.

Commuting imposes a financial burden as well. Commuting 5 days a week costs me between \$90 and \$130 per week in gas. I have to fill up my tank 2 to 3 times per week at around \$40-ish dollars per fill up. That is between \$360 and \$520 per month I spend on gas alone. If my parents were not in a position to help me pay for said gas, I would not be able to afford to commute to work and would be forced to find a different position. As it is, this takes my actual income down by a few hundred dollars, something that many state employees such as myself cannot afford. My car insurance has also gone up by \$20 per month because of the additional miles I am driving every week. I get paid \$2,654 per month after taxes, PERA, and medical are taken out, so this extra financial burden means I am essentially taking a 14-20% (10-13% if you calculate pre-tax monthly income) pay cut to commute to work every day.

I urge you to consider the burden--physical, emotional, and financial--that commuting places on state employees and to re-consider rescinding telework.

Thank you.

Dear State Leadership Team, and Honorable Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham,

Please consider the needs of state workers who have put the WORK in Telework over the past several years.

I am a loyal state employee who commuted to Santa Fe for eight years before the pandemic struck. In a very uncertain time, with uncertain work parameters and uncharted territory, I believe our staff at the Public Education Department kept our work moving. We answered so many calls about virtual learning, especially regarding how to keep Career Technical Education programs alive. I have many teachers who can attest to the help they received from us via phone, Zoom and email.

I believe in your leadership and that you have the best interests of the state at heart. Please remember the workforce that has put in extra work to be successful. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

PED-CCRB

I understand that some workers abuse telework policies. This is what performance reviews and disciplinary process is for. To ban telework by fiat will only alienate state worker further at a time when there are a high number of vacancies. I hear you don't even have offices for everyone. Beggars can not be choosers.

Please reverse the decree to end telework.

Warm regards.

I am strongly opposed to canceling the telework policy. I recently took a job with the state of NM in part because they offered telework, even though the pay was relatively low. My office has recently lost several employees to positions that pay better and offer telework. This decision will lead to lower morale, more turnover, and unnecessary hardship by those with children or older dependents.

The last two years have shown that we have the technology and ability to efficiently telework, and many other employers are continuing to offer this benefit to their workers. Please don't end this policy that clearly works!

I started working for the State in February of this year (2022). I would not have taken this job if it did not have the option for telework. I am still on probation, so I do not have many of the other benefits that the State claims to have - which are less benefits than my last two jobs offered. The ability to telework is the greatest benefit the State offers, since the pay is only 72% of what I was making at my previous job in New Mexico. Though I enjoy the work and my coworkers are great, working for the State has been one disappointment after another.

Some of the brightest minds in the IT field at my department have already left, those employees were irreplaceable and now more are going to leave. No one is going to want to work at the state for this reason as well so your only going to get the bottom of the talent pool. I understand that not all jobs need to be hybrid but most IT jobs can be. I for one am much more productive when working from home because I'm happy at my house, I save money on fuel, eating out for lunch and daycare. I am miserable in the office under those incandescent lights and the nasty bathrooms in my building that I feel like I'm going to catch a disease from. If the state could get their leases in order they could save money on space and heating and cooling cost along with many other associated costs that come with employees being in a building. Most employees have adapted to teleworking and very few want to go back. New Mexico's government services for it's citizens will suffer if the removal of telework happens because there will be very few employees left. I hope you actually care about your workforce and don't treat us like we are a tool for you to use and abuse.

Good Morning

Thank you for your service and for taking the time to read this today. Please accept this letter to respectfully ask your support to continue a reasonable degree of telework. While all persons and work situations vary, in my case telework has enabled me to: save money on gas (commute), meals. I can start work at home and then drive safely to work at a reasonable time (not in drive time), improves my health with less exposure time at work (Covid, flu, etc) and saves insurance dollars: I am healthier and happier with a reasonable telework schedule. Your support in this matter is most greatly appreciated.

Most respectfully submitted.

The advantages of telework include:

1. vast reduction in carbon emissions and time saved driving to and from work. For each employee commuting from Abq to SF for a year about 5 metric tons of carbon are emitted, wasting 10 hours commute time per week, totalling about 500 hours. You may have noticed in early 2020 that the air cleared up almost immediately when we went into lockdown. We should do everything possible to lower carbon emissions, and telework is very helpful.
2. productivity: I have worked for telecomm companies prior to shifting my career to public health. While it is important to show up physically and be part of a teamwork culture, working from home absolutely increases my focus and ability to work with focus, speed and accuracy. If some employees cannot do that, their manager can always require more face time in the office as part of an improvement plan. In the tech industry where employees are expected to be self-motivate and highly paid for their skills, telework has been a standard operating procedure and an attractor of talent since the early 2000s.
3. not having to commute most days is a de facto raise that will harm people financially in this climate of rising prices, especially at the pump.
4. HEALTH - i work in the infectious diseases bureau, and cancelling this policy flies in the face of the fact that the pandemic i not over, it's being complicated now by the upswing in flu and RSV for kids especially. Ending telework completely sends the public the false message that respiratory illnesses are under control and not a serious danger anymore. They are, and until we have a nasal vaccine for Covid-19, caution should be maintained.

For the sake of all New Mexicans, reverse this decision and give us a flexible policy which empowers managers to make smart decisions that benefit the state, its employees, and allows for individual risk differences.

Cheers

DOH

We have been working on a modified Telework/Office schedule for over 2.5 years. I understand that not all State Divisions can complete their mission from a telework location however, there are plenty of divisions that have very limited interaction with the public. There is no reason why they cannot review permit application from a telework location just like they would from an office location.

Access to telework as a competitive benefit is a proven strategy at improving employee retention and in helping address workforce equity issues for caregivers, persons with unreliable or costly transportation, and persons with disabilities. Aside from equity considerations, it is clear that in a time of low unemployment, high inflation, and globalized economies that our state government offices will become increasingly empty as the State fails to respond to the employment challenges in a way that reflects a reasoned understanding of our economic situation. A couple notes about my position:

- I am compensated 23% below the 2021 median pay for epidemiologists in my own role
- Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that employment of epidemiologists is projected to grow 26% in the next ten years much faster than other positions
- I can right now apply for fully remote based epidemiology positions with the CDC and state/local governments outside of New Mexico and would both gain full time telework status and increase my annual income by 40-80%.

If the State is concerned about maintaining expensive leases on empty buildings this problem will only get worse in the coming years as competitive benefits are taken away from employees who are paid well below median rates as a continuing exodus of employees and an inability to onboard more will get worse and worse. While I encourage the state to consider establishing indexed raises against inflation and establishing competitive compensation to hire competitive applicants, no benefit the state has offered me has improved my quality of life and commitment to this job more than access to telework. I cannot imagine you get more benefit for spending less money anywhere else.

Lastly, there were lots of rumors that as soon as the election was over and our votes were tallied that telework would be rescinded. The timing of this decision clearly indicates how our leadership views our value as being useful to keep them in office, but not for much else.

OCD provides an essential service to establish regulations and protect the environment and essential natural resources of New Mexico without inhibiting growth and development of industry. OCD has done this by modernizing our structure to be web based and provide services from remote options. This has allowed us better consistency, better management and has improved employee performance significantly. As of now our employees are overworked and underpaid, while still providing essential services to the people of New Mexico. There are record vacancy rates across State agencies, and now the Governor and the State Personnel Office are threatening to take away telework — one of the few perks that make working for the State a viable choice. I fear how our agency will function if telework is taken away as well as the mass exodus of employees that will inevitably happen afterward.

We need to keep current staff and recruit new staff to fill empty positions and very little to offer competitively that qualified employees would remain and not jump to private industry.

The Telework policy was a great benefit during the throgs of the Pandemic (Which is not over yet) , and was a great comfort to me as an immunocompromised individual who was frightened and stressed out about trying to keep from suffering catastrophic health complications and continuing to work serving the citizens of the state of NM.

As a state employee who lives out of town, I pay a minimum of \$200 for fuel each month to travel back and forth to work, so I have essentially taken a pay cut since telework has been rescinded. Personal as well as office moral due to this decision, is definitely waning.

I personally, like many others, am based in Albuquerque. By reversing the telework policy my choices are limited to accepting a several hundred dollar a month gas bill, an extra hour and a half of commute time via the Rail Runner, or to quit working for the state. I started in September of this year and have enjoyed my job immensely, as well as the benefits the state offers to their employees. Telework is something that prevents me from spending 3 hours of my unpaid time every single weekday commuting.

Thank you.

Removing the telework policy will create a heavy financial burden for my wife and I, both of us are state employees. Aside from paying for all the extra gas needed to commute, we are also expecting a child soon which will need more care than we can afford if we are forced to work at the office without being able to bring our child. We are not asking for full time telework, even one or two days per week would make a huge difference for our financial stability.

I will have to commute 200 miles round trip everyday. That means a lot of gas, wear and tear on my car and wasted hours. Teleworking is a big perk and it will help me stay on the job for years to come. I am more productive at work when I am working from home. I don't have to set aside so much time between meetings. I can focus on work without being in a cubicle where there is a lot of ambient noise. It makes me feel supported by management and it makes me more loyal to the state.

As a Taxpayer, I support telework because it saves lives, energy and the environment. With 8 new EVASIVE Omicron variants, RSV and 4 new influenza strains, the lack of public health policies is INSANE! Covid denial and lack of common sense mandates will destroy the economy. The Dems are lucky they ran against Fascism or I would not have voted for them because of their delusion that they can just wish away Covid. The GOP and Corporate Dems are more worried about empty buildings than worker's lives. Telework is the very least you can do.

I am currently attending graduate school at Highlands University and if the non-Mandatory telework policy is rescinded, I will unfortunately have to quit because the distance from my main duty station in Albuquerque to Las Vegas, NM would be too far to commute. I am currently traveling to Albuquerque for meetings one day a week, and teleworking in Santa Fe the rest of the week, which fits perfectly in my schedule and the schedule of my coworkers. Because I feel that I have much to offer with the Small Business section of the AQB (and my supervisor just let me know yesterday how much she needs me) and enjoy my job, I do not wish to let it go. I am already looking at alternatives for work if I am not longer able to keep my position with the State Environment Department. I am not the only one who feels this way.

In addition, our Secretary, Mr. Kenney has supported teleworking simply for the reason that we are able to accomplish just as much work while teleworking as we would accomplish in the office, if not more. He is very proud of our achievements the past few years in the midst of the pandemic. In addition, teleworking allows for mothers to be home with their children and aging parents, workers to take additional care of themselves with less stress, and greater job satisfaction without having to commute every day (which many state workers do). It also allows us to save money on gas! (In other words, State workers are under less stress, are happier and healthier if able to telework - and are apt to stay with their positions longer). This may be verified by recent employee surveys that indicate that job satisfaction has increased over the period of time while teleworking.

Thank you for your consideration.

I was hired this October by the New Mexico Public Education Department - College and Career Readiness Bureau (NMPED-CCRB). I telework from my homebase in Silver City. Living and working directly in the Region that I serve, has been important and favorable. It has allowed me to connect with people locally and personally.

Prior to coming on with the NMPED-CCRB, I was an educator for 22 years. One complaint that I heard often from fellow educators was the fact that NMPED was solely based in Santa Fe. Educators felt that PED was out of touch with regions and districts outside of Santa Fe and the Albuquerque area.

Ending telework, would force me to leave my current position. I live 5 hours away from Santa Fe. To uproot my family to move to Santa Fe, would not be possible for me. Living within the region that I serve, helps me provide the best possible customer service to my school districts.

I used to work in industry and was paid a lot. I took a 50% pay cut but I love working for the state and being a regulator to clean up the environment. There are not many perks working for the OCD (State), however, one was the telework option. I understand the importance serving the public and I am 100% available to the public. Telework allows me to cut my commute time down and spend less time in the car. I support telework as do many of the private industry companies we work with. I have many friends that have that option. Please keep telework available to state employees.

My fellow state workers and I deserve a telework policy that works. I worked 60 hrs a week for 2.5 years, providing quality service to New Mexicans, doing Covid emergency response. I worked while in the car, walking my dog, in the yard, in the bathroom, in my bedroom, from friends' houses, while cooking lunch, while waiting in line at the grocery store, etc. Most days I would take and make over 100 phone calls, while maintaining an ongoing email thread, text thread, and four Teams chats. I was doing this Covid response while also running my program by myself, since I have not had a Program Director in almost 2 years. I have worked overnight shifts, I have worked from 5 am-10pm, I have worked split shifts up to 18 hrs in a day, I have worked without breaks, I have worked alone while juggling too many overwhelming things that were way above my pay grade. I personally deployed close to 60 ambulances around the State to New Mexicans who needed them. I have provided guidance to law enforcement, doctors and nurses in Emergency Rooms, Teachers, City Planners, Business Owners, Dentists, Tribal elders, scared parents, frightened older people who are alone and cannot breathe, with professionalism and love. I did all of this via telework.

I am no longer doing Covid response and am just running my program, again, alone, for nearly two years. I have no more perks of overtime pay. Now I just get to do two jobs with no raise, and threats of having to go back into the office full-time while we are still seeing record numbers of sick people in Urgent Cares, ERs, and hospital rooms for even more respiratory conditions. I definitely feel used, underappreciated, and exhausted.

I am actively courting the California DOH and so are a few of my fellow colleagues if this rescind happens. If I quit, there will be no one to run my program at all. We don't feel appreciated enough by our Leadership and are feeling forced to serve other constituencies when so many of us have worked so hard to get into the State so we can do what we love, serving other New Mexicans. It's a heartbreaking feeling.

One month is also not long enough for caregivers and parents to figure out and afford childcare or CNAs, nor is there staffing available at these agencies to help, especially dealing with our non-raises during a terrible inflation. This all feels cruel and unfair. It has left many of us feeling abandoned, punished, unsure of the future, and depressed. Our President is pro-Labor and pro-Union and we are supposedly being run under a Democratic Administration, but it appears that the legislative finance committee report on office space matters more.

Please keep in mind the number of people who had to move from Santa Fe to Albuquerque and other surrounding areas because folks cannot afford to live here anymore. Please try to remember that our health and well-

being matters just as much as the constituents that we serve. It has been an honor to serve New Mexicans, while also enjoying more time with our families, friends, and pets, as well as saving money on car maintenance and gas, as well as getting more sleep.

Of all the unfortunate experiences the COVID-19 pandemic provided, the silver lining of it all was the opportunity to work from home. Taking away the daily commute was life-changing. More time could be spent with my family. More money could be saved because I wasn't having to fill my gas tank as frequently. Less time was spent on the road with irritable drivers. Ultimately, huge stressors were relieved by taking the commute out of the equation. The best part about all of this is my quality of work didn't suffer. If anything, it improved.

Since working from home, I have continued to make myself available for contact to the general public, stakeholders, permittees, and my fellow state employees. I have continued to be a trustworthy employee and public servant. And I think that rescinding the telework policy only demonstrates a general lack of trust of state employees.

Over the past 3 years, I have opted to continue working for the State of New Mexico when I was presented with amazing opportunities to work elsewhere, solely because I was not willing to give up the benefit of telework.

PLEASE, do not cancel the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy.

Over 15 yrs, I have lost many good candidates who could not afford to either commute to or live in Santa Fe. We have lost even more since covid and an understaffed HR. We recently filled some staff and management positions and am concerned we will lose some. Some of my co-workers made decisions about home purchases, only because they could telework and reduce commute days from 5 to 3. They can easily switch to consulting, working from home, not liking it, but getting paid a lot more.

This Summer I had no vehicle for several months, couldn't afford to replace it. I love my job, I am a professional with 15 years at AQB, but can't afford a car. If it weren't for two days of telework per week, I would have had to take multiple days off to deal with a roof leak/repairs and doctor's appointments. In Santa Fe, it takes an additional 35 minutes to 2 hours to commute between my home and work depending on time of day, if the bus driver sees you at the stop, and/or what his/her schedule is. Since covid, many routes were changed to "on-demand" which means you call Santa Fe bus, from the bus stop, and wait 10 minutes to two hours. I was only able to make regular doctor's appointments by scheduling them as video calls during my lunch break on the days I worked from home. After an hour round trip bike commute to a doctor's appointment, on a hot summer's day, would you want to add another 45 minutes getting to the office?

In enforcement we very behind due to years of staffing shortages. We have only a one-year statute of limitations to enforce on violations. There is no way I could have taken off all that time this Summer.

Honorable Governor Michelle Lopez Grisham:

State workers deserve a telework policy that provides safety, recognizes the benefits telework has provided for the State of New Mexico, and one that promotes security for state employees.

Specifically, on the issue of safety, during the covid telework mandate, flu cases in the country decreased by the thousands; now flu is becoming rampant. Currently, covid is still an issue. In one of the larger hospitals in New Mexico there are upwards of 49 adult plus additional pediatric in-hospital cases. To be hospitalized with covid, cases must be severe. Throughout the country, many hospitalized cases include vaccinated and boosted individuals.

There needs to be a safety net for at-risk state employees due to health concerns. Telework has proven to provide that safety for all.

Additionally, the State of New Mexico needs to keep current staff and recruit new staff to fill empty positions. Due to employees who have left, state workers have been burdened with filling in for those who have quit.

Rescinding telework by January 1, 2023, will result in an increase in employees leaving state employment to be able to continue protecting their families.

Thank you for your attention.

My agency has revoked telework, and it has negatively impacted me. It has me strongly considering leaving to find a job with remote options. Being in the office means less time for my family and more money on gas, parking, and food. I also know that my team lost out on the perfect candidate for an open position because of the lack of telework options. This decision to revoke telework will harm employees and the state, overall.

I am also very fearful that without the added benefit of telework, like so many private and other government agencies are still offering that when it comes time to fill the vacancies from employees leaving to places that do offer telework as an option, we will not be able to get the most talented people for those positions. The added benefit of being able to work remotely is very helpful. I commute from Albuquerque to Santa Fe 3 times a week as of right now and the wear and tear on vehicles plus the cost of fuel would kill me financially if it became something I had to do daily. I was hired while telework was already in place and it was one of the many reasons I was excited to accept the position.

In light of the current wave of increasing RSV, flu, and COVID-19 (omicron included) cases the telework policy is being rescinded in the middle of the peak season for increased disease transmission putting myself at an increased risk to infection from other co-workers who struggle to utilize sick leave while ill.

Even the ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND TERRITORIAL HEALTH OFFICIALS recognizes telework as an integral part of the future of public health. (<https://www.astho.org/communications/blog/seven-trends-will-shape-the-future-public-health-workforce/>) Like most state agencies, our organization was underfunded and understaffed BEFORE the pandemic, and now to say it has been devastated by the pandemic is an understatement. As an employee about to mark their FIFTEENTH year as a state employee, telework has been essential in not only allowing me to continue the work I care so deeply about but to care for my personal mental & physical health in ways that are IMPOSSIBLE while forced to spend 8 hrs a day parked at a desk in a poorly maintained state of office. An office where as a trans person with asthma and other chronic illnesses, I am UNSAFE because of environmental factors (pollution, traffic & transphobic discrimination/microaggressions).

The very first of NMDOH's own proclaimed VALUES is: HEALTH EQUITY- Policies, practices, and resources dedicated to assuring that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. The Governor/SPO's actions toward rescinding telework for state employees run in direct opposition to that value. It's time they recognize this and act to do what is right by state employees, and not commercial landlords.

In addition, there are many benefits to teleworking that affect not only the worker, but the employer (taxpayers can save as well if we manage the money correctly), traffic congestion in cities, and the environment. To list a few non-employee benefits:

- Overhead cost can be reduced
- Able to utilize above savings to increase wages thus increasing retention of current employees and interest in those who might begin working for the State
- Able to use teleworking as an incentive/employee compensation or help to retain good employees and reduce costs associated with training a new employee
- According to the Telework Research Network's proprietary Telework Savings Calculator™, "if those employees who held telework-compatible jobs (50% of the workforce) and wanted to work at home (79% of the workforce) did so just half of the time (roughly the national average for those who do), the economic benefit

would total over \$700 billion a year...."Save over \$500 billion a year in real estate, electricity, absenteeism, and turnover and productivity, that's more than \$11,000 per employee per year. Global Workplace Analytics. "Telework Savings Potential." Accessed March 25, 2020

- Boosts productivity as it puts the focus from time-oriented to task-oriented. For example: Cisco, a company that deals in networking equipment and network management for the Internet, found in a study that it has generated an estimated annual savings of \$277 million in productivity by giving employees the option to telecommute and telework [source: Cisco]."
- Gallup discovered that engagement climbs when employees spend some time working remotely and some time working in a location with their coworkers. Weekly face time with coworkers and managers seems to affect engagement: the optimal engagement boost occurs when employees spend 60% to 80% of their time working off-site -- or three to four days in a five-day workweek. job flexibility increases engagement. Gallup report 2020. "Gallup finds that this group -- those who work remotely 60% to 80% of the time -- is also the most likely of all employees to strongly agree that their engagement needs related to development and relationships are being met."
- Staff can work remotely when ill decreasing sick days taken which also decreases the spread of infections among coworkers decreasing the spread of infectious diseases overall
- Reduce stress which has increased health benefits which then decreases sick days/insurance costs
- Helps to create a Work-Life Balance
- o telecommuting can have stress-lowering implications for employees [source: Gajendran and Harrison]
- o "In this knowledge-based economy, what is important is getting the job done, not when, where or how many hours it took," Rhodes said. [source: Rhodes]
- Teleworking and other creative work schedule options are becoming essential to your ability to attract and retain talented employees. Work schedule flexibility is one of your most significant options in attracting millennial employees and retaining the knowledge and mentoring of Baby Boomers. Reasons Why Teleworking Belongs in Your Future (thebalancecareers.com)
- Regular work-at-home has grown 173% since 2005, 11% faster than the rest of the workforce (which grew 15%) and nearly 47x faster than the self-employed population (which grew by 4%) [Global Workplace Analytics' analysis of 2018 ACS data]
- According to a 2003 Bureau of Transportation survey, the average commuter spends about 26 minutes on a one-way trip to work, and a majority of commuters drive their personal vehicles [source: U.S. Department of Transportation]. This means that the average American spends more than 100 hours commuting to work each year, longer than the standard two weeks of vacation given to most employees [source: U.S. Census Bureau: Facts & Features]
- The average passenger vehicle emits about 404 grams of CO2 per mile (EPA.gov)
- There are also many benefits to the employee which I have not listed

In summary, teleworking boosts employee morale/engagement/commitment to the organization, reduces tardiness and absenteeism, reduces employee turnover, enhances company image as a flexible and friendly place to work, and decreases overhead costs to the employer.

As a working mom of 3 having telework taken away will drastically change how much I have to pay for aftercare for my kids. Please consider all the working parents and the situation we are having to deal with if this is taken away.

My unit at NMDOT consisted of 3 people and within a month's time my 2 coworkers left due to ongoing threats of needing to return to the office. I say return to the office because everyone incorrectly has been calling it returning

to work. We were able to get our work done, collaborate with each other, and be productive while working from home. My Supervisor was the first to leave because if returning to the office became a reality he would have to choose between finding a new job or becoming a stay-at-home dad. This is because time and transportation are of the essence, and he lives in Albuquerque. He easily found another job working for LANL making much more money and has the option to work from home. My other coworker also lived in Albuquerque and simply did not want to commute to Santa Fe any longer after proving work can get done from home. Finding a new job with a private contractor for more money was very easy for him. Now I am alone and doing the work of three, but I don't blame or resent my coworkers for leaving. They are happier with their new jobs and doing well.

I have been offered a position at a different state agency that was doing full-time teleworking and now with the possibility of the telework policy being rescinded, it seems like a moot point to leave my current agency.

I have lived in New Mexico since 2017 and this is where I came to learn the phrase "brain-drain". With the recession of telework, folks are not necessarily going to leave the state, but they will be getting paid likely by a contractor from out of state. Contractors who take advantage of the fact the state has so few employees and cannot complete work with so little staff. These contracts come at an exorbitant cost. A cost that is significantly greater than the office space leases the public is complaining are empty. After learning the majority of the state-employee body lives and commutes from Albuquerque to Santa Fe, I'm a bit confused as to why teleworking would not be an option since it directly conflicts with the Climate Action Plan.

To be blunt, this is a very stupid hill to die on. The state will lose more employees, not be able to obligate funding due to understaffing, and then in following years not receive funding. All because some of what?! I'd really like to know what the point of this is! I'm even one of the few who doesn't mind coming to the office, and I am still against an outright doing away with teleworking. Teleworking gives people flexibility and provides them the sense that they themselves and their work is valued, regardless of how or where it gets done. As long as it gets done.

If this policy does go away, State of NM is going to have to make some serious considerations of how to compensate employees in another way. Decent pay or not having nearly half of my paycheck going to benefits, taxes, and a pension that continually threatens to become solvent would be a good place to start. Not some glitchy Access Perks app with coupons! Way to make me feel valued, try again SoNM...

Once again, HR/management is hoping to pull a fast one by not working with collective bargaining regarding the telework mandate. COVID numbers are going up not down. We also have flu and RSV. Hospitals are over capacity. Do they not listen to their own experts? Those of us that fall into the high-risk category, like me, exposed to COVID are still at high risk for severe illness or death. Nothing has changed for us. It is very upsetting to me that HR/management wants to eliminate the Governor's hybrid telework mandate that is working for clients and workers. Clients are better served now than before as there is more flexibility in how, when, and where they can be reached. My clients are immigrant families. They do not and will not come to the office for appointments because they are missing work. These families have a hard enough time finding work. I can contact them and provide care coordination over the phone while they are at work. This could not work out any better for my families and their medically fragile children. I am a non-mandatory Public Health Medical Social Worker for Children's Medical Services. My sitting in an office does not mean I am more accessible to my clients; having a phone and internet creates accessibility and flexibility. Per this morning's front-page article in the New Mexican, "Social worker shortfall, State facing possible crisis level scarcity of licensed clinicians, report says", clients will suffer if there are no workers the state system to serve them. Teleworking allows me to reach clients I would normally not be able to reach. The Governor, HRB/management need to accept this fact. If telework is rescinded, many of the most experienced social workers, (I have 40 years of experience) will leave their positions with state government for positions that pay more and allow workers to work from home.

It is my hope (not holding my breath) that HR/DOH/ management will have the foresight, wisdom, and flexibility to look at how we are serving all our clients and what works for them. However, I don't think this is just about serving clients. I think management does not know how to manage a remote work force and is afraid to do so. If

DOH wants to run public health like a business and provide “excellent customer service” (I am quoting a public health director for the northeast region) then public health needs to adapt fast. “If you trusted an individual enough to hire them, you also should trust them enough to get work done when and where they prefer”, quote from Harvard Business Review post 11/30/2022. Perhaps the Governor will be able to see that the non-mandatory hybrid telework policy is a working for clients and will continue to let the mandate stand as is. The client’s we serve should not have to suffer the consequences of a bad decision.

State employees have continued to work efficiently from home, and returning to the office is bringing anxiety and frustration to employees while lowering morale. For positions that can and are done on a computer and via the internet, forcing a commute and an office environment is a detriment to productivity, personal mental and physical health, and familial and community health and well being. The families and communities of persons who telework benefit from the time and money they have to spend with them instead of needlessly spending time commuting and in an office and spending money on gas. Telework works. The unnecessary policy to commute and be in an office because that’s what used to be done and there’s empty office space degrades employee recognition, value, contributions, and morale.

If working from home continues to not be an option then the state should expect resignations from employees seeking better and more preferred opportunities. Let state employees who reside around the state work from home. It is unnecessary to require a physical presence in Santa Fe (or wherever the office is located) simply because it is the capitol and the old infrastructure is there. The now preferred mode of employees is working from home and the infrastructure is the internet.

Please keep our state competitive. Telework is the future and we have mastered it. Finally! New Mexico is at the forefront of technology - no more “Land of Entrapment”. I’ve also noticed that most of our applications are online or cloud based. So why do we need to go to an office just to access something we can access from anywhere? Yes, I can see there are some positions that require direct customer contact, but I am with Application Development and need that quiet time to think, focus, and concentrate on my projects.

I don’t know if IT situation is unique, but now are team is being set up in a call center-like setting with 110 cubicles. How am I supposed to focus in that setting? And may I add that building is away from the facilities we support, so I would be driving to a building to work remotely anyway.

While teleworking, I have gotten to know my neighbors, their children, their pets, postal carriers, etc. I am actually more involved with my community now, including neighborhood watch, homeowners association I love it! So to argue that we are not getting the socializing we need is absolutely false.

To rescind the Telework Policy seems punitive. I’m not sure who made who mad but please don’t punish us all.

When the pandemic hit and we were all sent home to continue to work for the people of New Mexico, while caring for our loved ones at home and fearing the unknow, we adapted and even thrived. The silver lining of the pandemic, at least for me, was showing that we are more than capable of producing exceptional work while teleworking and being there for our children. As a full-time working mother, the telework option has been the best part of working for the State of New Mexico. Since my daughter started kindergarten in 2021, I have been able to drop her off at school in the morning, go into the office to work for most of the day, then be there to pick her up after school and finish the rest of my workday from home. Having the option to telework enhances our quality of family life. I do not have to stress about where my child will go after school. Being able to telework just a few hours a day has made all the difference in my personal and professional life.

I understand that the option to telework is a privilege, but it is an incentive that we are thrilled to have, and it motivates us even more to provide the best service we can to the people of New Mexico.

Hello,

I work for the NMED Ground Water Quality Bureau. I strongly disagree with ending telework for the following reasons:

- 1) The Covid pandemic is not over. Cases are on the rise. Telework allows state employees to continue to perform their duties despite being exposed to or recovering from Covid. My wife (who works for NMED PSTB) and I recently tested positive for Covid. She was symptomatic and tested positive several days before I did. Telework allowed me to continue working for several days after she tested positive and before I had symptoms. Without telework I would not have been able to work those days and complete critical projects. Telework also allows us to work partial days while we are recovering but still symptomatic. Without telework we would be unable to perform any work during our needed isolation period. The same is also true for any other contagious illnesses.
- 2) Telework is critical for retaining employees. NMED and the state of New Mexico is drastically understaffed. Removing telework would only exacerbate this issue and would not improve the services the people of New Mexico need. My wife and I have considered finding other employment due to this announcement.
- 3) Telework can save the state millions of dollars. A recent news article highlighted how the state of New Mexico is spending millions of dollars on offices that are vacant due to employees teleworking. I agree that this is a serious issue but ending telework will not solve it. Ending telework will cause more state employees to quit increasing an already high employee vacancy percentage. Even with all employees returning to the office, the high employee vacancy percentage means a significant portion of the offices will still remain vacant and the state will still be wasting millions of dollars on vacant offices. If the state is truly concerned about saving money (as it should be) the best way to address this issue to reduce the number of offices needed by having employees with alternate work schedules share office space. For instance, an employee who is scheduled in the office Monday and Wednesday could share an office with an employee who is scheduled in the office Tuesday and Thursday. This option still requires employees to report to the office two days a week but would greatly reduce the amount of needed office space. This would save the state millions of dollars and help to retain employees.

In conclusion ending telework will not improve the services state employees provide and will not save the state money. Please consider instead requiring employees to return to the office two days a week and utilize an alternate work schedule to reduce the needed office space.

Thank you.

I know Jerome Powell needs the US to have more unemployment to bring down inflation, but taking away the telework benefit is a horrible way to help accomplish that goal.

Many other employers in New Mexico offer higher pay, better benefits, and teleworking options. Also, why is it that SPO is advertising telework as a perk to recruit new employees, while at the same time taking it away from existing workers?

I find it interesting the SPO announcement came on the afternoon of the election certification. It's obvious current and prospective State employees were deceived in order to gain votes for the Governor. Eliminating telework would be a stab in the back to New Mexico State employees and their families!

My fellow state workers and I deserve a telework policy that works!!!!!!

INCREASE IN COSTS, WORK COMP CLAIMS.....

We want to work to live not live to work!!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I have lost fellow employees since the decision to work 3 days a week and know without a doubt, the mandatory 5 day in-office work week WILL result in a loss of many more employees. Most new hires during the COVID-19 pandemic live 50+ miles of their base of work and do not consider commuting a viable option.

Help us help you make State Government Functional again! Sometimes it feels like we are fighting a losing battle. I've talked to many state workers who are passionate about public service, but administrative decisions keep making it harder and harder to work here. If we want a robust and effective state government, we need to be a competitive employer, full stop. Every year we are further behind in wages, and now we are not going to offer a remote working option even though most other states and other larger employers in NM do? Honestly, why would anyone work here? At some point, even those of us who are the most passionate about public service are going to have to walk away for the sake of our own mental and physical health.

I am writing to share my thoughts and concerns regarding the states plan to rescind remote work.

As a person who has lived in a rural community all my life and worked in a rural community throughout my professional career, having the ability to work for PED is very personal and important to me. I would have never had the opportunity to work for PED if telework was not offered as an option. I have worked in education for 11+ years and never thought I would have the opportunity to work for the PED and be able to advocate for, work with, and provide assistance to the districts, schools, and students of New Mexico on such a large scale. I feel having the option to work remotely for a state agency such as PED has allowed me to continue to be an even better role model for those who come from a rural or small community, allowing them to realize the opportunities offered to them, when remote options are offered. I received my Master of Social Work degree from WNMU in a remote setting, I worked for DOH for 18 months in a remote setting and have worked for PED for 10 months in a remote setting, and I must say, these remote opportunities exhibit Equal Opportunity at its finest.

Having to drive approximately 100 miles to the Santa Fe office would not be ideal for me, especially in today's economy. Sadly, if the option for remote work is rescinded, I would have to consider finding another place of employment, leaving the position I have learned so well and committed to, making sure that I am doing my best in continuing to serve the state of New Mexico.

I am aware of other remote opportunities offered by other states and countries which I am qualified to apply for. However, it saddens me to think that other states and countries are willing to utilize my talent and education when my own state is considering taking this opportunity away from me and others in my same position.

I interviewed for a local government position and turned it down because the pay was not enough for me to afford living in the city (i.e. Santa Fe) the position was located in. I would have had to commute 2.5 hours each day just to work. When I could easily do the same job in another state for more money. I am able to live in Santa Fe now because I took a similar remote position that actually pays a competitive salary.

And pay employees more!

I, as a mother, need to be there for my kids. I cannot leave my kids for 60 hours a week again. I should've never done it. I want to contribute to society, my community and the children of NM but I have a responsibility to my children first.

I have been a public servant for my entire adult life. Without telework I will have to stop working after 20 years of service. How can that be? I am an effective, reliable and responsible part time telework employee. It is only fair to allow for telework so we can serve the public and take care of our families as well. I ask this respectfully.

Thank you.

Dear Elected and State Representatives,

I am taking this time to write you because I feel very strongly about this issue on behalf of my co-workers. I have been with DCA for about 14 months and began my tenure during a heavy tele-work phase. I myself do not, and never have, tele-worked as it is less ideal for the type of work I do; I need to be with our library and archives collections to take care of them. However, this is not the case for most of my co-workers who can easily spend a day or two at home completing certain tasks. There are innumerable benefits to that arrangement for my co-workers.

We have been understaffed for a long time. We have all worked very hard during that time- and did it remotely. We don't make much money- several of my co-workers spend hours commuting daily because they can't afford to live in Santa Fe on their wages.

I believe, as the state professes to believe, that our employees are our greatest asset- please listen to us, we are not machines, we are people. We are not loafers or slackers or somehow criminal and have done nothing to be treated so. We can work well, BETTER, sometimes in fact, from home, at least part time.

The Department of Health ALREADY has so many vacancies in the contracts department that it has made paying out our contractors functionally impossible— it's been an embarrassment to my team and to the state as a whole.

With telework, I am able to be home when my kids come home from school or if they're sick. Before telework I would leave my house at 6 am and get home at 6 pm and barely see my family throughout the week. With the telework benefit, I have a closer and stronger relationship with my wife and kids and take some of the burdens off of my wife with the extra time of not commuting.

INCREASE IN WORK COMP CLAIMS AND EXPENSE ALL AROUND.

LET US WORK TO LIVE NOT LIVE TO WORK!

A study showed, boomers prefer working in office due to seeing their family less and less. I DO NOT WANT TO SEE MY FAMILY LESS AND LESS. I actually love my husband and my 2-year old and would rather see them than my coworkers. Don't take away from those who actually benefit.

I am a state employee working at the New Mexico Department of Health as an epidemiologist. I am opposed to the blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy.

If you cancel the telework policy, I will look for other jobs. As an epidemiologist, my work is primarily computer based and I do not need to be in the office everyday to complete my job duties. I live in Albuquerque and my position is based in Santa Fe. I currently commute several times a week according to my team's telework agreement, and that is a reasonable burden on my personal time and energy. Commuting every day will substantially reduce the time I have to take care of myself and my family. It will also double the amount of money I spend on gas, while increasing negative impacts on the environment. The increased commute time will outweigh the benefits of working at the State.

The NM Department of Health is already having trouble recruiting epidemiologists due to low pay. Our telework policy is one of the few benefits we can use to woo applicants. Other organizations offer higher pay and telework options, making it hard for us to compete. Without epidemiologists, many critical efforts to monitor health outcomes will be stalled, making our Department less able to respond to our communities' needs.

Cancelling the telework policy will cripple our ability to serve New Mexicans, not improve it. Please retain the telework policy.

The benefits of teleworking in my life have created a healthy space that was long overdue needing to balance a fulfilling life. Teleworking has allowed me to go from 3 anti-anxiety medications to one! A light one at that. The ability to balance relational, emotional, mental and spiritual health through a peaceful state of mind has improved the quality of my life and my families. Teleworking allows me to live a healthy lifestyle as I can prepare snacks and meals best as opposed to forgetting to pack food if rushing and having to go through a drive through spending money and eating junk. My workspace is a small, shared office with another lady. Our backs are within 2 feet of each other's. There are no windows. Teleworking gives me the freedom to have focus music on without the hassle of having to keep earbuds charged, sit in a sunlit window space and I'm able to take a call without having to walk out of the office. There is no water cooler chit chat ramble time that's wasted. The money my house is able to save from my working at home as allowed us to get ahead and achieve personal financial goals. Less eating out, less laundry, less fuel for my SUV. Without the hustle and bustle of leaving the home every day has given my brain the mental capacity to retain information better. There's not a constant to do list running through the forefront. I focus on the task at hand. Please allow us to continue to telework!

Thank you for your time

DDSD

Through telework employees have had opportunities to work from home under extenuating circumstances. This has allowed more effective work output and less time away from work.

I personally do not understand why any government agency would want an additional thousands of people back on the roads everyday contributing to the already congested, poorly maintained roads. Right now I can wake up and go straight to work, I have NO office distractions while working at home (overhearing adjacent conversations, getting "highjacked" into conversations when I am busy). I have often felt that I can get more work done from home than in the office, and have heard the same from my colleagues. On several occasions I have left the office to go home to get my work done because there were too many distractions in the office, office distractions DO significantly impact work productivity.

Additionally, during the pandemic, the cost of living in places like Santa Fe became much more challenging for state employees, with rents, and the costs of everyday things increasing at a higher rate than employee pay. The additional cost of fuel for commuting will affect all employees very negatively, and the environmental impacts of the increased fossil fuel consumption cannot be understated.

The other week someone who works for Sandia was trying to get me to apply for a couple jobs there, I told them: "no way, I love my job, it's a heck of a workload, but they allow me to work from home, which does a lot for my motivation and desire to stay with the state." I love my job, and I love serving the citizens of New Mexico. Please do NOT take away this much loved policy!

Greetings,

State workers deserve a telework policy that works.

Plain and Simple - The Pandemic has globally proven how capable Remote Work is in today's digital age.

Teleworking has reduced emissions due to travel to and from work everyday. If we are truly serious about climate action, requiring state employees to report to work at an office full time again makes no sense on a number of levels. A statewide plan for reducing office space use makes better sense but it needs to be thought out not just demanded. State employees no longer fit into the office types that were made for full time use. Employees need assistance to reduce their office space usage like storage, assistance and supplies for moving, assistance with internet connections, and offices that will comfortably accommodate those that do not come in on a regular basis, not just cramming many people into an office made for one and an office environment that was created for

individuals. There needs to be a new vision for employees to do their work. This can only be accomplished by a team that is dedicated to creating the plan and understands the new accommodation and IT needs for employees, who will be teleworking statewide.

Teleworking works. It is the vision for the future. Please let NM be a leader in innovation of a new work environment, not one that lives in the past.

I am opposed to the sudden blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy. The policy is an agreement with the Unions and SPO. It is obvious that you do not realize the impact of this email on State employees. This will cause many more employees to leave or retire early.

The State needs to keep current staff and recruit new staff to fill empty positions. State employees are overworked and have been before and during COVID, filling in for our coworkers who have left, and underpaid by 37% for the work we already do!

Canceling telework is only going to make this issue worse and lead to more people quitting or retiring early.

I travel 50 miles to Santa Fe to work and was taking the Park n' Ride, but now am not because other workers cars are being vandalized and having the catalytic converters stolen from them at Park n' Ride and Railrunner lots. I have PTSD from being hit from behind by drunk driver going over 100 mph. To be able to telework, helps me to deal with the stress from driving to and from work and recharge and be ready to go again.

Thank you.

As a federal employee, remote work has been nothing but positive for me and my mental health. As someone who struggles with depression and anxiety, being able to work in the privacy of my own home decreases my symptoms and allows me to work more efficiently, without concern of what those around me are thinking. Thanks to Microsoft Teams, communication is still speedy and I she experienced minimal problems with reaching my coworkers and supervisors.

Working remote also helps workers save on fuel costs and promotes a decrease on GHG emissions, which I believe NM promotes? I understand that a major concern for the state is the leasing of buildings and the associated loss in revenue that would result from permanent remote work arrangements. However, I encourage you to look towards the future; New Mexico struggles with housing shortages, just like the rest of the country. Consider converting empty office buildings into low-income housing or community centers, which are much needed across the dismal slab of suburban concrete that is the US.

Without these uncomfortable shifts, change won't happen.

As a single mother I began working for the OCD in March 2022. I have a masters degree in ecology and was looking for a position that would give me some flexibility. I was hired with the option to telework 4 days a week, which allowed me to save on childcare and fuel costs. At that time this made the position attractive and financially feasible. I have faced financial difficulties with the increased office time and for this reason

The Non-Mandatory Telework Policy should stay in place and I oppose the cancellation of this policy. There are SO many reasons to keep the telework policy in place and I have touched on a few below.

The most important aspect of keeping the policy is retaining current staff and recruiting new staff for empty positions. The same day the email went out, I started hearing from coworkers who will be quitting if the telework policy is revoked. Allowing state employees to work from home is a huge benefit on our side when it comes to hiring and retention since state wages are not as high as in the private sector. The vacancy rate is already high and will only get worse if this policy is reversed, and those who stick around will be more overworked than we already

are. I have many friends and family whose private sector jobs changed to 100% telework forever because of the better work-life balance AND cost savings for the company. The added time I get back for myself every day for not having to commute to work has a HUGE positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing. I guarantee the quality of work will go down across the board if employees are forced to go back into the office. The happier you are in your personal/private life, the better you perform at your job. Plain and simple.

A second benefit on all of our minds as State employees is the cost savings for us. Getting to work from home means we don't have to spend as much money on so many things, such as child care and gas (which, outside of normal summer-winter fluctuations, is going up, up, up). I sympathize with my coworkers who will have to start paying for child care if they can't work from home--the exorbitant costs will be difficult to absorb. Additionally, we all know inflation is out of control right now, so the price for ALL goods and services has gone up and continues to go up. As a single person on one income who makes \$60k a year, these higher prices truly add up. It is crazy to see how much my weekly grocery bill has gone up in the last two years. The two, \$250 refund checks were nice, but it doesn't come close to covering what we have actually lost.

I previously brushed on cost-savings for companies, which, in our circumstance, are potential cost-savings for the State. I will admit I am not a property management expert, but it seems like if we work from home and need less office space, the State can review our current building leases and lower the footprint we need to operate by consolidating. Rent is high for housing, so I know it's high for office space too. Not to mention the costs of internet, cleaning services, lighting/heating/cooling, etc for all of these buildings. I know there's typically a pretty big fee to end leases early, but in the long-run it could still lead to savings for the State.

Thank you for listening to a few of my viewpoints and weighing them against the cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy.

I know several people who will leave their position to find another one where they will be able to telework.

To whom it may concern,

I started with NMDOH at the beginning of the pandemic and was enthusiastic about assisting with the COVID response and performing my regular work aimed at preventing overdose deaths in NM. The pandemic has been incredibly difficult on public health workers. As I am sure you may have seen, a significant portion of public health workers report they plan to leave the field and still report anxiety, depression, and PTSD due to pandemic response. Despite the emotional toll of the pandemic, we are a resilient and passionate group of professionals. As a member of the public health workforce I can attest that many other positions, including some with non-profits, offer higher wages and significantly more PTO than what is currently offered by the state. However, telework has been a job perk that I believe is preventing further turnover on my team. I am passionate about what I do and know that it makes a difference, I believe in my work at NMDOH and work with an amazing team of caring professionals.

I have worked from home full-time for the overwhelming majority of my employment at NMDOH and have consistently produced quality and timely work, assisted with additional responsibilities during the COVID response, and assisted to help the work of my team to progress despite staff turnover. During this time I have received favorable performance ratings, and maintained rapport and communication with my supervisor, team, and external partners. My mental health/emotional wellbeing, physical health, and financial health have all benefitted from the lack of commute and optimized work environment I have at home. I have been able to better care for my mental health by taking walks in a neighborhood where I feel safe on my breaks, have access to healthy food for snacks, saved a significant amount of time and personal expense by not having to commute, and I have a comforting environment conducive to productivity. Additionally, the lack of people commuting is better for the environment. Despite new office space availability, there is still limited space and open floor plans. All meetings are still occurring via Zoom/Webex and my current work station provides a private and distraction-free environment.

In order for the important work we do to maintain momentum, constant turnover cannot be the norm. Knowledge, connection, work, and time is lost every time we lose a colleague. I know that state workers believe in a shared vision of improved health for all New Mexicans, and we are all on the same team. I hope that the state will show employees, our health, happiness, and opinions are valued by implementing permanent flexible telework policies for all employees.

Thank you!

I am writing because I am completely opposed to the Telework Policy being rescinded. Speaking for myself and on behalf of my Division, we have not only achieved performance standards but have excelled to an entirely new level at our jobs. Our Division was already 100% electronic when COVID started. The transition to Teleworking was so smooth, no one was aware that anything had changed. Our Division has received many, many commendations regarding our outstanding service, throughout this time. My customers tell me on a daily basis that they have had nothing but a positive experience working with me, they appreciate me for responding to them so quickly and going above and beyond to quickly process their requests, etc. I work HARD, because I am grateful to be allowed to Telework. I put in overtime every day without reporting it, in order to complete my assignments. Why stop for the evening or the weekend and drag it on longer when I can work a little bit later and complete it? I love making people happy, whether it is customers or my Supervisor, or my Director. I don't report the extra time because I'm grateful to be Teleworking. It is my way of saying Thank you!

It does not make sense to deny good and hard working employees the right to Telework when our Division is 100% electronic. It doesn't make sense to go backwards in customer service. We will no longer be able to answer calls and emails as timely as we currently do. We will no longer be able to work on last minute contracts and amendments. For me, when in the office - my commute is 4 hours each day. I have a modified schedule to allow me to catch the train, so my lunch hour is cut in half and I have to scramble to get things completed, often I am not able to. When 4:15pm hits, everything stops, no more answering calls, no more finishing work, I have to run to the Train. When I'm working remote - I answer all calls, sometimes even during my lunch break, sometimes after I'm logged out. I continue working on my assignments until I can find a good resting place or finish it altogether. I work hard and I'm happy to do it. But when in the office, I'm exhausted and even though I try even harder to keep up, time is severely limited and it just causes more stress.

My health has been affected by it. I followed all mandates, wearing a mask, getting the vaccine and boosters, social distancing, etc. But when we were ordered back to the office in April, I knew it was only a matter of time before I would be exposed to COVID. And I was...during my commute on the train, even though I had my mask on, I was exposed and ultimately infected with COVID. Had I not been ordered back to the office, I never would have gotten it because I wasn't exposing myself to COVID.

Working for the State has been a wonderful experience while Teleworking. I have felt safe, and happy. Well rested, and I have thrived. I have a son who has Asperger Syndrome, he has thrived as well. During the return to the office - I have had numerous severe health issues arise. Once while at the office, I had a hypertensive emergency. About 2 weeks later, again at the office, I was sent to Urgent Care. Due to my long commute (to do at the office what I can do from home), my lack of rest, pushing myself so hard to stay on top of work, I have suffered physically along with the stress, anxiety and depression of knowing that it will not only happen again, but I may not be able to stay if it becomes life threatening. Does it matter to the State? It doesn't seem to.

Why would you order us back to the office when it is working so well for some Divisions from home? Why would you go backwards to old ways that don't work very well? Why would you send us home only to order us back in the height of rising infection numbers? For those of us who have proven ourselves to be devoted, honest and hard-working employees...why would you so callously hurt us this way? Financially, commuting is expensive. Along with the physical and emotional effects of forcing me back to the office, you are also establishing a pay cut, which hurts me again. I know that many will resign if this is not reconsidered. I may be one of them, because

I honestly don't know how long I can do it. I felt that even part-time almost killed me. Who knows what after-effects I will suffer after getting COVID (caught on train commuting to work).

For those of us who have proven ourselves to be hard-working employees during Telework, review our evaluations, review our compliments from customers, take it case by case. I implore you to please reconsider, and let me continue to work remote. I will continue to do my best.

If you send me back to the office, it will affect my customer service, and performance, as well as my health and well-being.

Many of us have health conditions that might make us vulnerable in an office setting. For those of us who do not have forward facing jobs/jobs that directly deal with the public, the option to work from home allows us to continue giving the necessary services to our customers, both internal and external, without putting ourselves at risk.

I am currently working a hybrid schedule and as the season for colds, flu, COVID and RSV deepens, I have stayed away from the office because I haven't felt well and didn't want to share with my colleagues. I have continued to work a 6 day a week schedule, because of the flexibility of being able to work from home. You have workers who do not lose productivity time because of this option. Please consider keeping the telework option for SONM employees.

Being allowed to telework the last two years has been the biggest blessing of my life. It has allowed me to be present in both my work and for my family at home. It has allowed flexibility for me to get my work done and meet my deliverables while being more present with my family and community. Telework has supported my mental health, physical health, and stress management.

At the NMDOT, we are in a unique position to have offices / patrol yards / etc. THROUGHOUT the State of New Mexico and by allowing telework, we will be able to retain our talented and smart college students / trade school graduates / etc. by allowing them the flexibility to telework and return to their home communities to make New Mexico better!

I have been very proud to work for the State of New Mexico and have felt proud of the progress we've made to allow telework through the pandemic to support the nuclear family; however, I now feel disappointed that we are regressing as New Mexico tends to do in all its metrics.

To Whom It May Concern:

I believe it would be beneficial to have a work location in each region of our state, at a local hub, such as New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions/Connections or another local building that I am able to go work at a few times a week. Personally, for me taking this position, I am getting less money than my colleagues that are in the schools -- But I love being able to provide resources and support for other professionals in my field, and this position has allowed me to grow as a professional and gain knowledge and skills. If I would have to commute to Santa Fe, I, unfortunately would have to put in my notice to stop working for the state. As a single parent household, and having to share custody of my child, commuting just won't work with my schedule. In addition, I feel like there is already many turnovers in bureaus/offices and personally, I know the bureau I am within will lose at least six key leaders who have exceptional experience and expertise that they are providing to constituents in the state. I believe having leadership throughout the state is beneficial for our constituents because it allows our employees to have that local connection.

I appreciate your consideration for telework employees and please know that we are working diligently to provide resources and supports for our New Mexico students.

Thank you.

My fellow state workers and I deserve a telework policy that works for us and our families! At CYFD, we are out here everyday serving NM families but seemingly are expected to neglect our own. As a CYFD BHS employee, my job does not require my presence in the office daily as even before teleworking most business functions are done by computer, not in the field. I used to work for PS and understand the need for them to be in office but I believe a blanket not teleworking policy for all departments is lazy and not supportive of workers.

We are overworked, filling in for our coworkers who have left, and underpaid for the work we already do and not paid for taking on multiple roles as I am currently doing!

Telework helped my mother, father, and brother. During the pandemic and while my father was going through cancer treatment. they helped my dad work from home because he was immune compromised. Please don't take this away from New Mexican families.

Our workforce is demoralized, exhausted, incapable of making a change, and leaving. This includes the leadership ranks. When supervisors cannot hire because they cannot offer competitive compensation, telework, and paths for advancement, then the work falls to them. When management up the chain cannot or does not do anything to ameliorate these barriers to hiring, the overworked supervisors leave.

My supervisor announced this week that she is leaving for LANL. My bureau is supposed to have 8 FTEs. We have four. We cannot hire because state funds for positions come through ASD. ASD spent it all elsewhere.

For the state of New Mexicans, adequately fund and support your employees.

The Environment Department and Secretary Kenney worked incredibly hard to measure employee satisfaction and productivity throughout the pandemic. The Weekly Activity Report, a weekly department-wide update was sent out on November 17th and detailed a well thought out, extensive plan for shared workspaces specifically for those teleworking. At no point in this report did the department find issue with the quality of work done by those teleworking or allude to potential retraction of the non-mandatory telework policy. The decision made to rescind telework diminished my confidence that we're all in this to better New Mexico. There was no collaboration or communication involved in this decision and it seems as though there was little thought to the consequences. Managers, Bureau Chiefs and even Department Secretaries were blindsided by SPO's rash reversal of policy. The fact that the decision was made without consulting stakeholders with knowledge on the consequences is unconscionable. Many of my colleagues have made serious life decisions with the support of the Environment Department continuing telework: purchasing a home and moving nearly two hours away from our physical office, expanding their family, and turning down other job offers.

Our department secretary stated in a recent department-wide meeting that we simply cannot afford to NOT embrace telework in order to remain competitive in this job market. The November 4, 2022 US jobs report showed 1.9 jobs for every job seeker which proves there is no shortage of available career opportunities. Rescinding telework means losing many hardworking employees to the private sector and to institutions out of state. Those who remain (mostly for reasons of impending retirement, parental leave, etc.) will be so inundated with work that many will search elsewhere to avoid burnout. This will further exacerbate personnel issues and productivity at the state level which ultimately impacts the people of New Mexico.

Vacancy of your big, expensive, offices is not our problem. The workforce is evolving and we demand that you do too.

Don't ignore our calls for permanent telework. If you do, I promise talent will leave.

To whom it may concern,

I am a credentialed (MBA), New Mexico born and educated professional who was recently offered a job within our beautiful state's department of tourism. The job has dream job potential to me, but I must make the painful decision of rejecting the offer as a hybrid work schedule cannot be guaranteed.

The cost of living and lack of housing, affordable or not, in Santa Fe makes relocating unfeasible.

I live in Albuquerque, and have a life I want to live. The daily commute to Santa Fe five days a week precludes any semblance of work life balance and is incredibly costly in both time, vehicular depreciation, and gas. Even the Rail Runner is a costly time sink. I do not want to spend approximately 27 days a year commuting to work.

The revocation of telework is also a seriously regressive strategy from an ostensibly progressive administration.

I want to work in the public sector, but it just cannot compete as an employer with such egregious inflexibility.

The state is guaranteed to hemorrhage public servants if telework is not restored.

I would take a \$10,000/yr paycut in the position I was offered if I had a 2/3 hybrid schedule wherein I commuted to Santa Fe just twice a week.

Be reasonable, do not force New Mexicans to suffer a badly wounded, anemic and dysfunctional state government because it cannot hire and retain the best and brightest.

Frankly, I would expect this kind of thing from the weatherman that's why I'm so disappointed to see it come from the governor's office.

Let's be clear about the message this Administration is sending to the workers of the state of New Mexico. This Administration cares more about the campaign contributions of a handful of rich landlords and utility companies than ensuring that the taxpayer not be bilked and have to pay 64 million dollars in leases for unused, unnecessary, and unproductive office space. It's not about us being in the office, we did our jobs during the pandemic and we proved that telework has worked for 2 years after.

There are very few if any incentives for state employees to remain working for the state of New Mexico when the labs and the federal government which are our largest competitors offer telework along with better pay and benefits. My department is under constant brain drain and recently we have lost a lot of our employees that had 20-plus years of experience over to the labs. 53% of new employees don't even make it through their first year of employment with the state of New Mexico of those that remain on the 30-year retirement plan most of them don't even make it to their fifth year of employment before they move on to other jobs with better pay and less dysfunction. Little Wonder as to why a 25% vacancy rate on top of the 8,000 other state jobs that were cut during the Martinez Administration burnout is super high and fast. All that's left is those employees that are on the 25-year retirement plan and are close to retiring. For new employees the old-timers tell them straight out that they have to do everything possible to get to the labs or to the feds within their first year hopefully within eight months of employment with the state. We are the minor leagues for the labs and the feds.

Why should anyone work for State government?

I used to work 100% in the office at the beginning of the pandemic with no option for telework at another public health employer. When I came to this job, I was very fortunate to know that the State cared about my wellbeing and offered a telework schedule that worked for me. We began to come into the office more frequently earlier this year, but still had flexibilities when needed and I appreciated that.

I am urging you to reconsider the blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy and allow staff to work with their supervisor to find a balanced schedule that works with both the State and the employee.

Thank you for your consideration.

I am considerably more productive on the job while doing telework. As an older person with mobility issues, coming into the office (aside from occasional in-person meetings) is difficult for me and I am much happier in the telework situation.

As a former state employee, during the pandemic, my unit demonstrated that it was not only conceivable, but actually possible to run some state positions entirely remotely. We had close to 400 staff members from across the state conducting COVID-19 case investigations and contact tracing. The unit was brand new to the state, and built from the ground-up as a remote unit. While there was a learning curve, we overcame and we were quite successful at accomplishing our mission.

I'm now looking for permanent employment with the state, and I would be remiss if I didn't fight for the opportunity for state workers to have some form of telework/hybrid schedule. To think otherwise after what we've learned during COVID is inane.

Los Alamos National Laboratory is establishing a location in Santa Fe that is supposed to have 500 new positions. The federal government pays a lot better and has better benefits than the state so we can certainly expect to lose many employees to them, especially if the telework policy is removed. I have lost several fellow employees to the Los Alamos National Laboratory already, including one person who lives in Albuquerque and was working at our office in Santa Fe. Los Alamos is almost twice as far as he was previously working yet he decided to take the job anyway.

On a more personal note, given that I currently telework half time from where I live near Pecos, about 40 mins each direction to my office in Santa Fe, removing telework would quite literally double my gas budget from about \$100 per month (at \$3 per gallon for gas) to around \$200 per month. This would also apply to the number of miles I currently put on my vehicle and the associated maintenance costs for that. On days that I telework, I am able to get an extra hour of sleep, which makes me more alert and productive throughout the course of the day. If there are any emergencies at my house, I do not lose an hour and a half of work time strictly for travel to fix it. I spend less on food since I am not tempted to eat out as often. No one has ever had a problem getting a hold of me when I telework, nor have they had a problem with my productivity. In fact, I may be more productive because I am not interrupted as often as when I'm in the office and I am not distracted by noises from others working. We have construction going on which takes up about 1/4th to 1/3rd of the parking lot. There have been times I have not been able to find parking because of this. On days where the office is empty, we are able to keep the lights off which saves on the cost of electricity.

As a supervisor, I have had applicants ask about the telework option as being an important requirement for any position. Without this, it will be almost impossible to hire and fill positions at the salaries offered.

I have worked here for 8 years and this has been one of the most difficult years seeing so many of my coworkers leaving because their mental health has been compromised. The one thing that they were able to have to decompress was working from home which is now gone. It makes no sense in taking that benefit away when all we have been hearing the past couple of years is how productivity has increased since implementing telework. There are many things wrong with the system that are left unheard and this should not be one of them. I am happy people are speaking out on this issue. Even one telework day a week would go a long way for a lot of people in this field.

I am at high risk for severe COVID-19 illnesses. I worked for the COVID contact tracing unit from day one until the last day. Just because the state ended the unit does not mean COVID is over.

I now have a new job in the DOH. It makes no sense to demand that everyone come into an office when there is not enough office space and a lot of jobs are not public-facing.

I would really have to think about my long-term employment with the state if forced to work in an office and put my health at risk. I left a 25-year medical career at the start of COVID because the company I was working for forced me to put my health at risk.

In addition I would like to advocate for people who have physical and medical disabilities. Many fine employees are in this group but may be overlooked because they are unable to travel to an office.

The blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy is arbitrary and unfair.

Private entities offer telework schedules and higher pay, therefore, it's difficult to compete with them. It cuts down on costs, such as fuel and repairs on our vehicles. Cuts down on the carbon footprint in our state. There is less stress as we do not have to deal with traffic, and we are more rested.

In short, state employees are happier working from home.

As a mother of 3 under the age of 10, the option of teleworking has been a true benefit especially during these hard and uncertain times of the pandemic. Being able to telework has allowed me and my family to remain safe during outbreaks and I have been able to continue to work and provide for my family as the sole provider.

I am an employee with the state of New Mexico. I am writing this message because I understand the State Personnel Office and The Governor wish to take away telework as an option for state employees. This is a regressive and short-sighted decision. My level of job satisfaction would be dramatically reduced if I lost the option for teleworking.

Telework is the way of the future, and removing this option for state employees is a strict step backwards. Telework, or any other remote work schedules, greatly improve life and working conditions for employees. The list of benefits is long, but here are just a few: higher employee satisfaction, better work-life balance, reduced operational costs, reduced expenses for employees, easier to recruit and retain top candidates, better for the environment... The list goes on. I would ask anyone against teleworking to try providing a valid reason to oppose it. Are you trying to say state workers have not been doing our jobs since the telework policy was implemented? Facts and data would refute that position. State employees have continued to fulfill their essential duties over the past years, and in many cases we have adapted to new and better ways of doing work as a result. It is truly a win-win situation, and I cannot think of any reason to rescind the current teleworking policy. By doing so, you will be hurting thousands of employee's lives.

To sum up, it would be a massive mistake for SPO and The Governor's office to rescind the current telework policy. Employees unanimously appreciate the flexibility, productivity, and happiness it brings to their working lives. If the decision is made to rescind the policy, you will see a great loss of talent, lower productivity, and be far less able to attract new talent to state positions that already struggle to be filled. Support state workers, support telework.

State workers deserve a telework policy that works, not something that there is always chance of being cancelled. Our state workers have shown telework WORKS. I may be retired from SoNM, but I still care about this state. State Workers keep this state RUNNING!

TELEWORK BENEFITS ALL CITIZENS OF OUR GREAT STATE!!! Less office space needed to accomplish the work which leads to less \$ for lease and upkeep, less electricity used, less gasoline used, less heat and pollution, less wear and tear of vehicles, less stress on workers, just to name a few. Productivity has shown to be great.

Teleworking has helped my mental health by giving me control of my own schedule and not expecting me to be in social environment all days of the work week. It gives me an opportunity to focus on my task when I don't want or have time for interruptions. Having control of my own schedule makes me believe that my supervisors and colleagues trust me in completing my work, however taking this privilege away makes it seem that there is a lack of trust which creates a very hostile environment to work in.

Hello governor, representatives, and others:

I am a long-time Department of Health staffer who is strongly opposed to the telework order being rescinded. Here are just a few reasons:

1. Several of the bureaus in my department have vacancy rates well over 30%. We are already covering the workloads of multiple people. Most of my colleagues, particularly younger ones, live in Albuquerque. None of us can afford to live in Santa Fe on a state government salary. This change adds an additional 10 hours of commuting every pay period. This is time we could be using to spend with our families, engage in self-care, and cope with the overwhelming stress of serving in a state government that is phenomenally understaffed and underfunded.
2. The number one question we are asked when interviewing new candidates is whether telework is possible. Jobs which allow telework, particularly full remote telework, receive more applications. From a study in spring of 2022, LinkedIn showed that remote jobs received 50% of all applications despite representing less than 20% of all jobs posted. A similar study from Career Builder found that jobs that allowed employees to work from home received seven times more applications than in-person roles. Why on earth would we be reducing one of the only positives for recruitment that we have, given that our salaries are non-competitive and our benefits have not increased? American workers have changed through COVID. The expectation is now for flexible, remote work.
3. This is a huge financial burden on state employees, who will now have to find ways to pay for additional child-care, elder care, doubled commuting costs, as well as the opportunity cost of spending time with their families and loved ones.
4. The Legislative Finance Committee's Program Evaluation: State Facilities and Space Utilization (11/15/22) #22-05 explicitly states that the state should consider moving toward INCREASED telework to save money. The report outlines the fact that 99.9% of state government employees teleworked for some percentage of the time in August 2022. The report outlines how Utah scaled up telework and modified state space standards and will save \$430 million dollars over the next ten years. Tennessee is saving \$5 million annually. Both California and Washington have significantly reduced office space needs by increasing telework. This report explicitly recommends, repeatedly, that the state implement a clear, mandatory telework policy to reduce office space needs. "A 2022 LFC evaluation on state personnel recommended SPO consider setting a mandatory systemwide telework policy to promote fairness across agencies and market it to potential employees as a benefit. A systemwide telework policy would also promote consistent telework eligibility criteria across agencies and allow for long-term facilities needs planning. SPO should set a systemwide telework policy, with consistent eligibility criteria for telework, by January 2023." Logically, the solution to office space concerns is to allow some employees to work full remote and to reduce the state's office space footprint. Bringing everyone back will cost the state MORE money, since people who are physically present in offices use more electricity and water than people who are working at home. This decision is going to cost New Mexican taxpayers millions of dollars that could be better spent on programs.
5. Finally, as a person who is physically present in state offices and who is participating in discussions with colleagues, between 30 and 40% of the remaining DOH staff have begun to look for new work or are planning on doing so should this policy pass. Young professionals who have not accrued enough time with the state to be vested in retirement plans are particularly disinclined to stay. In my small circle, I know of at least ten staff in multiple bureaus who are definitively leaving should we end telework. Some of these people are the only members

left of their programs. The idea that state workers will leave state jobs if telework is reduced is not just union propaganda. It is the truth.

State workers have made tremendous sacrifices over the past three years to keep the state running in the face of budget cuts, staffing shortages, record inflation levels, and hardship. We deserve better than this.

The cost of living in Santa Fe is high; for many state employees, rent (not to mention a mortgage) is simply out of reach. Telework (either total or hybrid) allows workers to significantly cut the time (for some 2+ hours per day) and cost (up to a few hundred dollars per month) of commuting. This, in turn, allows workers to better support/care for themselves as well as their families and communities.

Over the last few years, many state workers have demonstrated they can do some or all of their job effectively and efficiently while working from home.

On a personal note, I moved to New Mexico this summer so that my partner could pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. Working from home allows me to give her the assistance she needs because I do not have to spend 2 hours, 130 mile round trip commuting 5 days a week. We live off of my salary, and the maximum amount of loans she can legally receive. I drive a compact sedan that is fuel efficient. The cost of gas for a month for me would shoot from \$100 to likely above \$400. I absolutely love working for the state of NM, and I hope that I do not have to reconsider this position due to financial hardship.

Thank you for your time and I hope you will read this and listen to other state workers with an open mind.

Removing telework hurts everyone. It makes it more difficult to hire and retain quality staff. In person, staff are encouraged to do the bare minimum and show productivity through presence. But teleworking, we can show productivity through product and be evaluated for what we actually accomplish, rather than how busy we can look. A government office that trusts and empowers its workers accomplishes more and better serves New Mexico.

The full removal of telework is a disservice to the state employees that have proven their tireless effectiveness over the course of the pandemic. Many of us shaped our lives around the expectation of continued telework and its revocation is damaging. I personally know individuals planning to, or who already have, quit because DCA removed telework as a blanket policy. We invested in equipment, developed procedures, and innovated to better our workflows and improve customer experience, all designed around telework. Going back to the old ways only hurts our patrons and our staff.

I have personally decided over the last year not to apply for several positions that I am fully qualified for both because I believe in the mission of my department and because the quality of life teleworking provides is valuable to me. Without telework I'm not sure that believing in my work is enough to hold me in a job where I am severely underpaid for both my level of qualifications and the level of technical work I do.

Blanket removal of the telework policy amounts to an effective pay decrease for state employees. This is following several years where, while pay has increased, it has not kept pace with pay in private industry, pay by the federal government, or the cost of living.

Telework has had real benefits for my family. We have been able to have two working parents with only one car. We have been able to eat three meals a day with our child. We have been able to rely on family who are uncomfortable watching our child alone for childcare. Without telework all of these will go away and cause real struggle for our family.

We will have to buy a second car. We will have to put our son in full time daycare. As a family of 3 we will struggle both financially and mentally with this change.

The result of this struggle may be one or both of us having to leave state employment for an employer who either pays more fairly or allows telework. There are many positions that have both.

I wish the state the best of luck retaining and hiring employees with this misguided policy change.

Honestly, the recent actions here with respect to how we were communicated to from SPO is in total contrast to the principles, that are advertised by state gov't as incentives to join the team i work in. I've invested 17 years of my career now with the State Environment Dept. to do the best i can do as a public servant; and new political appointees seem to be often double-speaking and taking actions that are counter to trust building. It's very disappointing and it's directly affecting my department's ability to carry out it's important duties under our mission statement. Every day it seems i hear of at least one person leaving...and it's due to the exact kinda of policies and very very poor internal communication and heirarchical power management within the state. I hope some serious thought is given to how state employees are being treated at the levels were most of the work is being done.

Thanks for allowing our voices to be heard and i hope that it has some impact on things soon.

I am opposed to the blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework. We deserve respect and recognition for the work we do and have done over the last couple of weeks.

The vacancy rate for Epidemiologists is 40%. I manage 4 open positions and everyone that I offer the position refuses based on salary offers. I have to work all these positions. This is not sustainable. When telework goes away, there is no chance to EVER hire somebody else and both my programs will close down. We do not only pay less than other states, but hybrid work is part of their work environment. Times have changed.

You will have empty offices because nobody is working for the state anymore.

Please re-evaluate based on the current reality in DOH.

Telework has allowed a little more room in my budget saving on gas commuting from Albuquerque to Santa Fe daily. It has also given me 2 more hours of free time daily, not driving to and from work every day. Our State salaries are far below private industry pay rates. I love what I do, protecting and making sure contamination in the environment of New Mexico is properly cleaned up to assure a good future for all New Mexicans. Please continue non mandatory telework. It makes up for the low salary.

As a supervisor, I can attest that thoughtful implementation of telework can increase efficiency. My staff worked under a hybrid remote and onsite model for most of the past year. By any metric, our accomplishments were greater than that of many previous years, despite significant staffing vacancies.

COVID, RSV and other virulent illnesses continue to tax our state's healthcare systems, and a blanket cancellation of telework forces workers to assume greater risks with no demonstrated benefit to public services.

Telework is also a huge benefit to morale. My staff and I appreciate the environmental and economic benefits from a reduction in commuting, and the psychological benefits of workplace flexibility and employer trust. Job applicants show great interest in the possibility of hybrid work and consider it a significant incentive.

The recent decision to cancel telework was not made in consultation with existing staff, supervisors, or management, most of whom support continuation of a hybrid model. The state employees who have struggled to keep government agencies functioning in the face of high vacancy rates and low pay deserve intelligent, well-considered policies, not expedient reactions to political haymaking.

I am able to accomplish work tasks and respond to taxpayers phone calls and e-mails just as efficiently at home.

I work for the State of Indiana where a permanent 2-day-per-week remote work policy has been implemented as well as significant salary adjustments that raised my salary over 30% recently.

New Mexico needs to keep current staff and recruit new staff to fill empty positions. Indiana has experienced the same issues and that is why the state government took action. I hope New Mexico does the same because I would hope to return someday. I was born in Santa Fe and graduated with my masters degree from New Mexico Highlands University in 2018.

I personally work from home due to a heart condition, cptsd, and other chronic health issues as well. Before Covid working in the office was a nightmare for me and I had a hard time because of my health and would often have to call in which made it hard to keep a job without being on probation for attendance. I literally got to the point of suicidal thoughts because I felt like such a failure for not being able to work like normal people do in office and I can say telework absolutely made such a huge impact on my quality of life and mental health. Working from home has given me purpose and hope again. I no longer feel like I can't maintain a steady job cause of my physical or mental health and have become a valued employee at my company for almost a year now which might not be an accomplishment for most but I am so happy and proud to have done it and look forward to continuing to do it.

Please do not cancel the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy. Allow employee the flexibility at least a few days a week, it makes all the difference for us.

The work done partly remotely has allowed many of us to be more efficient and creative. It offers flexibility, better hours, less commute time and expenses for many.

My fellow state workers and I deserve a flexible telework policy.

I am not opposed to going to the office when warranted, but little of the work that I do requires me to be in the office. Even more problematic is that it is difficult to provide the State with quality work when my work entails reviewing challenging technical documents and my office environment is cube-land and sounds more like a call center, complete with meeting rooms that open into my office space and the ensuing after-meeting meetings disrupting my work. And the work load is overwhelming, especially given the significant near-constant understaffing.

New Mexico state workers, including some of my friends, deserve to have the option of telework.

State employee retention has been historically poor.

Additionally, New Mexico can be an early advocate for effective telework policies, setting positive examples for other government entities and private companies to reconsider their policies. If I have learned anything from the pandemic, it is that the Home has been severely neglected for many decades because of how many families started to depend on second incomes and lengthy commuting. Being able to spend more time in the home these past two years has changed my perspective on family life. Our society desperately needs to allow people to develop and maintain healthier home lives. Telework allows this by cutting out hours of commuting time per week, reducing expensive fuel use, and increasing time spent close to those who mean the most to them. Please think of the many state employees who must commute to and from Albuquerque, 100 miles every day, because Santa Fe is so unaffordable! That can be as much as \$80 a week just in transportation costs. The costs saved by working at home can be enjoyed by both employees in the form of healthier household budgets, and the government in the form of reduced or eliminated workspace-related costs.

State workers deserve a policy that works.

My fellow state workers and I deserve a telework policy that works and cancellation of the current policy on short notice will create downstream consequences that will reverberate throughout the environment department.

The state already struggles to retain and recruit new staff to fill empty long empty positions. I've heard this sentiment expressed by some of the brightest and highest performing colleagues within an already small team and this will be a huge blow to the already low morale.

I am disheartened to learn that NM state is looking to rescind the statewide non-mandatory telework agreement and am writing to express my disappointment in the decision. I am a clinical neuropsychologist who works for the NMDOH Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, Intake and Eligibility Bureau. I was hired in September 2020 and thus I have been successfully completing my job from home since I started the position. I have really enjoyed my position at DDS and I have learned that telework is a necessity for me at this time.

Most importantly, I do not believe that my presence in the office provides added benefit to clients, however, losing my expertise will be detrimental to the clients DDS serves. My profession as a neuropsychologist is so specialized that there are only a handful of other neuropsychologists who work in the entire state of New Mexico and thus I will not be easily replaced. My current job position was reportedly open for years before my hire. With no benefit to me or the clients we serve, it would be difficult to justify staying in this position with such a high cost.

Specifically, the elimination of telework will cause a major disruption to my family's day-to-day-functioning and a significant financial burden due to a need for childcare. The telework agreement has allowed me to keep my daughter out of daycare because of the flexibility it allows in combination with my husband's work schedule. Without a telework option, I would need full time childcare that would result in annual costs of at minimum \$20,000 per year. The state would also be asking me to expose my daughter to respiratory viruses in daycare at a time in which the state just issued an emergency order due to a spike in pediatric respiratory cases and pediatric hospital units over capacity. Moreover, the telework option provides a more equitable environment for caregivers. Rescinding telework will be a major detriment to this population of state workers.

Rescinding the telework agreement due to a few workers not fulfilling their duties is akin to punishing the whole class because one student didn't do their homework. I have a Ph.D. Completing this degree requires a tremendous amount of initiative and stick-to-it-iveness. I also have consistently received high ratings from my supervisor and contributed to significant positive changes in my job during the entire two years I have been working in this job position, which has always been working at home. In no way should I be lumped together with individuals who are not doing their jobs. Additionally, if there are concerns about unused office space as recent press suggests, there was an opportunity to downsize with the latest office move in DOH office space in Albuquerque. Decisions related to office space should not have to trickle down to me and cause extra burden to me and my family.

I am hoping that we can come to an agreement that is a mutual benefit to both myself and the DOH.

My team and countless others have shown during the pandemic that we were as productive if not more while teleworking. We did this because of the emergency, and it had the added benefit of lessening the carbon emissions from our commuting, and gave us more time with our families instead of a commute.

My division is seeing, and feeling this shortage first hand. I would not be surprised if more highly qualified and talented staff leave as a result of this policy change.

Hello and good day.

The Covid 19 pandemic ushered in opportunities for change that New Mexico's public servants would be wise to seize and preserve. One of the most transformative is the opportunity for telework. Given the vast distances that separate communities in our beautiful state, telework offers New Mexicans a chance to spend more time at home with their families while taking traffic off the road (and emissions out of the air) and sparing workers the

stress and hazards of commuting. State employees have proven that in many cases they can do the work from home just as well as they can from the office, and given the trouble we have had filling positions, it is needlessly punitive to demand workers who can fulfill their duties remotely return to the office. A few other points:

- 1) The pandemic is not over. RSV is a real risk. And flu transmission is high. It's safer to allow work from home.
- 2) Long-term leases on state properties mean the money for the office space has already been spent, and sending workers back in will not immediately reduce costs. In the long term, telework arrangements may provide the opportunity to save money on office space, and the state should consider this. The state is investing in broadband infrastructure -- why not expand telework options rather than demanding workers risk life and limb and waste money on gas? The environmental impact is real as well.
- 3) The union worked hard to negotiate the telework agreement that was put in place in 2021. Any changes to be made should be worked out in good-faith negotiations as well, not rushed in response to political attacks.
- 4) On that last point, the Governor was just reelected in a commanding victory over her opponent. Like many union members, I support New Mexico's political leaders. We have invested time and energy to support state government and would like to see political capital expended in our defense. Stand up for state employees and continue to make sure telework remains an option! This will also enable us to recruit more competitively and fill more of our open positions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Warmest regards.

DOH

We deserve more thoughtful solutions to challenges revolving around telework.

Over the past two years we have adapted and overcome many challenges that surfaced because of COVID. My fellow state workers and I stepped up to the challenge.

There are many who benefit from the current Non-Mandatory Telework policy, and many of which are not employed with the state. In between accomplishing work-related tasks, providing care to an elderly relative, a child, being a source of information and leadership in our neighborhoods and local communities are just a few examples of how our society benefits from the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy.

State workers have been given an opportunity to bolster their standing as public service officials and bring deeper meaning into the work we do. This has been very motivating to me as I am sure it is for my fellow state workers. To see the prospect of telework disappearing is really disheartening.

Thank you.

Teleworking protects the environment and makes our roads less congested. It offers a benefit to employees that will help the state recruit new hires. It saves on the cost of office space. It prevents the unmitigated spread of communicable diseases. Our hospitals are filling up and just now you all decide "Hey, let's bring everyone together indoors!" Seriously?

The vacancy rate is even higher than 25% at the AIR QUALITY BUREAU. I am personally at the end of my rope with the inability of the state to fill positions for months and months, even a year or more. My workload is getting to a point that is not humanly possible to complete in a timely manner. We have regulatory deadlines which have been missed multiple times by many due work overload.

Going back to the office means my days will translate to 12 hours days. I will not be able to continue my current work schedule and this will impact the quality of my life. If additional co-workers leave due to the new policy, I will definitely do the same. I've been with the state for over 4 years and at this point, due to my seniority among co-workers, I lot falls on my shoulders to a point that I am not longer able to tolerate the burden placed on me.

Are you not concerned that those New Mexican citizens being actively recruited by the state are being promised telework options? Aren't you concerned that these employees would start their employment with the state and feel immediately betrayed? This action, I'm afraid, is not going to inspire much loyalty and faith in the state government as an employer, who already has trouble with retaining first year employees.

Prior to the election, Mark Ronchetti explicitly said he did not support state workers teleworking. Governor Grisham didn't say anything about the matter, leaving it up to voters to imply that she did support telework. That is one of the large reasons I voted for Governor Grisham in the November election. However, now to find out that her office and SPO started working on this directive almost immediately after she stepped off the podium from her acceptance speech, is extremely disheartening. I feel like I, and other state employees were duped into giving our votes to Governor Grisham, while she didn't have our best interest at heart at all. I feel very betrayed by this telework policy decision. I certainly understand that those agencies/positions within agencies that interface with the public on a day to day basis need to go back to the office in order to best serve New Mexico citizens. However, I see no reason why administrative staff and those staff/agencies that have proved services can be delivered while teleworking should also be made to go back into the office.

Not only is telework a great benefit for state employees, but the state already made significant investments in purchasing additional employee equipment, software licenses and packages, and decisions about building lease renewals all based on the directive that telework was something the state was going to continue to offer for certain employees. It seems like such a waste of taxpayer money to be making these purchases and then go back to a working environment that doesn't take full advantage of these purchases we have already paid for!

Moreover, I also would like to express my astonishment and displeasure at the way this proposed policy was rolled out. I can't believe that this is something that was being worked on for weeks without any mention to the Secretaries. The Secretaries are SPO's and the Governor's Office's ambassadors to state employees.....to keep them in the dark about a monumental decision such as this is just extremely poor management. Sending an email out ten minutes prior to sending that email from SPO out to employees statewide, is not "working" with management and the union. That is an ambush rooted in strong arm tactics. I think that you may have purposefully rolled this out without wanting to engage all the necessary stakeholders, because you are trying to strong arm us into doing what wins the Governor the most political points with the legislature. If this is true, I feel extremely disgusted that this motivation would supersede the best interest of thousands of New Mexicans. No wonder those of us employed at the state feel totally betrayed by your offices. To get such an email that affects so many of our personal lives and then to have radio silence from SPO and the governor's office is completely unacceptable. Moreover, you all haven't even had the decency to communicate with the Secretaries, to then disseminate your reasoning for the decision etc to state employees. To state employees and other New Mexico citizens that have heard this information from state employees, your actions demonstrate a total lack of empathy and concern. Many employees all of a sudden have to find childcare, which is already extremely limited in certain areas, pet care, working vehicles up to commuting, elder care—all within the month time frame you have given. These financial hardships can't be born when many of us are already struggling with the inflation issues that both of your offices are well aware of. It is especially distasteful to impose these burdens right at the holidays, a time when many families lack disposable income and time to make these necessary arrangements. You have lost our faith, our trust, our support, and our compassion, since you are unable to extend us the same courtesy. We have been alienated by the very people that are supposed to be looking out for our best interests, and I can tell you, that is extremely disappointing and demoralizing.

I can only assume this decision was made with citizens of New Mexico that need access to state personnel and services in mind—I wouldn't have to assume if SPO and the Governor's Office had been more communicative. However, I would like to point out that this decision will actually hurt New Mexicans, other than state employees and their families. Firstly, wasn't the Climate Change bureau just created.....creating a bureau to fight climate change but then, at the same time, forcing thousands of New Mexicans to commute up to an hour and a half one way to work in state offices seems counterproductive. One could question if the Governor's office and the government of New Mexico, for that matter, are REALLY committed to the changes needed to combat climate

change. Doing the same old stuff isn't going to get us there....this is the time for innovation! More cars on the road leads to more carbon emissions, more sitting traffic and longer commute times for everyone, and a higher probability that New Mexicans will be seriously injured or killed due to auto accidents. Secondly, I have heard from state employees in the Children, Youth, and Families Department, who were already forced to report to the office by their Secretary, that they are sitting 4 to a cubicle. These employees have to discuss highly sensitive topics regarding individual families and children in the presence of 3 other state employees when they are working from their desk! Tell me how that is better serving this population...to have their privacy violated so significantly! These situations will become much more numerous if all state employees are forced to report to their offices on January 2....there simply is not enough space or equipment for staff in the various offices. Why are you all so focused on this quick turnaround? Seems an entirely arbitrary decision that is not supported by current logistics. To me, that again, seems like extremely bad management--why would you want to set up service departments in such a way? That is not better serving this agency's constituents. Thirdly, I would also like to point out that although COVID-19 impacts have been significantly mitigated with the production of vaccines, we are still in the pandemic, as evidenced by the spike in COVID cases across the state, country, and globe. You made the decision in 2020 that the best way to keep New Mexicans safe from the COVID-19 epidemic was to set up teleworking. Just because some people in the Republican Caucus are tired of other people getting to work from home, doesn't mean that disregarding this public health directive is the correct decision for the health of New Mexicans. We are still fighting this epidemic. Some of us still live in homes with New Mexican citizens that are significantly more at risk of long-term, negative impacts from COVID-19. Tell me again, how sending employees back to the office to sit 4 to a cubicle, 5 times a week, for 8 hours of prolonged exposure is in the best interest of New Mexican citizens.....

In closing, I must reiterate my extreme disappointment and disbelief that SPO and the Governor's Office could make such an impactful decision in a vacuum and notify those directly affected by this decision so callously. The lack of communication after sending such an alarming email, seemingly out of the blue, is highly offensive. I have never felt so disrespected by an employer in my life. Moreover, what is worse, is that SPO and the Governor's Office doesn't even seem to have considered the logistical nightmare this would impose on state employees, both personally and professionally. Why exert such force for short timeline when it is extremely evident that none of the fact-finding relevant to such a decision was done? It is undoubtedly clear that this proposed policy shows your offices show a lack of empathy, respect, and common sense. I really expected better of people that are in such high-up positions within the state government. I will repeat that you have lost our faith, our trust, our support, and our compassion. I feel very strongly that you all owe an apology to state government workers for how poorly the notification of this proposed policy was rolled out. I feel very very strongly that you all need to reevaluate this proposed policy.

Telework has been very beneficial to me as I am fighting cancer and am able to work from home. If I have to go back, I will not be able to work as my oncologist has said not to until I am done with chemo. This would put my coworkers at a disadvantage as they would have to do my job also. This is not fair to them or me who is very capable of doing my job just not in an office setting at this time.

The added stress of 2 plus hours of travel everyday affects my health, stress level, and added cost for fuel directly impacts my life. I have been more healthy, can perform my work tasks more efficiently, and support the HWB program without compromising my health and well being. Many other companies are allowing telework and competition for personnel has shown that the quality of life is as important as more money. Working for the state has me given the satisfaction of helping the people and environment of New Mexico and has shown it's employee's the consideration of embracing telework rather than seeking new employees and getting them trained over time to perform their task assignments.

We have been highly productive in my department, and it speaks for itself when we have been praised throughout the last several years for our ability to be not only successful at home but also being AHEAD of our work... not behind. I am so saddened to see the hatred and lies about employees of the state not doing their jobs which is an insult to us all who have done an exemplary job working from home... our employee evaluations speak for themselves.

I believe, however, employees who deal with the public in person should be physically available in person due to the nature of their job. ex. MVD, Vital Records, etc...

Since returning to the office, all of my colleagues have had to stay home due to getting sick from being in the office around each other, it has been like a carousel, a rotation of all of us getting sick... passing things because we are being forced to come in while COVID is ever-present and not going anywhere. For the sake of your faithful State Employees who serve you and the citizens of this state, please allow us to stay home for the protection of our health as we continue to effectively do our jobs!

We are currently being overworked due to vacancies as it is, and ABSOLUTELY cannot afford to lose another employee. It is not fair to the employees that are working to keep the state running and cannot use their annual leave that they have built up over 240 hours that have been dedicated and faithful and will have to lose it due to the short staff and being overworked as it is.

Please consider your dedicated employees that have been faithful in keeping your state running and flowing.
Thank you.

A blanket cancellation doesn't support equity for all employees. Many are still struggling with childcare, caring for elder family members, gas prices, etc. A cancellation of this policy will impact many employees in a negative way. All state agencies need to come to terms that the world and the workforce is not going back to "normal", COVID changed many things and opened our eyes to new and improved ways of work/life balance. Other employers in NM are keeping a hybrid model and also increasing wages - the State of NM needs to do the same.

I am one of those employees who will be leaving state employment if this happens.

I was among many staff who worked extremely hard to fight against the COVID pandemic, many of us working long hours of overtime and weekends to test and vaccinate New Mexicans. Many state workers proved they don't need to be in the office all the time to be dedicated public servants.

The labor market now is so tight everybody is finding it hard to recruit and retain qualified workers, let alone the highest quality workers. The state can't compete in salary, but it can with benefits and our hybrid work schedule which attracts a lot of job seekers, especially younger generation ones. I believe there is little to gain and much to lose by ending the telework policy. It is puzzling why our progressive governor would support such a regressive stance at this time which will clearly hurt staffing for state government and hence all our customers statewide.

Instead of making State Government a better place to work, this idea undermines any progress and goodwill that has occurred for employees since the pandemic. Every employee I know who teleworks hopes they can find a different job outside of state government if this policy goes into effect.

We do not get paid enough to drive into the office. Inflation, energy, and fuel prices have wrecked our lives. Many of us have had to increase our costs of internet at home to support our telework. We are under contracts, leases, and mortgages that we might not otherwise have entered. We made childcare plans and other important decisions based on the apparent permanent telework options. We feel like we have been cheated! Telework was the one beacon of hope in a gloomy employment setting and low morale.

For the sake of your employees and their families, reverse this decision!

Child care is extremely hard to come by. I have been on the hunt for almost a year with absolutely no luck.

Ending the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy will cause the morale of current employees to decline, as it seems like we are being penalized. Telework provides families more time together, and easier access to spending time with your kids, something my parents used to be able to do with me and my siblings. Taking this away from us will cause debt for childcare, stress about what to do with your kids, gas prices, commuting and car needs, which will in turn cause people dread going into work. There are already multiple vacant positions, which us current employees have had to pick up slack for, taking telework away will make it worse and make more people want to leave because so many other places are enforcing telework. We live in a new era, we have to move with the times, not stay stuck in the past, and if we can work from home then why shouldn't we be allowed to. We shouldn't worry about what the public is saying about state employees returning to the office, everyone will always have their opinions on state employees, and that should not dictate this decision. Please allow us to keep the telework option. Thank you!

COVID-19 is not over and many state employees, including myself, have special health issues and or income restrictions that make commuting and working in State buildings everyday a challenge.

I am not paid enough as a state employee to live in the city I am employed in, Santa Fe, and thus must commute to Santa Fe from Albuquerque. This is time consuming, exhausting, and expensive. My one day from home has been making the commute physically and mentally sustainable. Revoking telework is insulting to my work ethic and does not take into consideration life circumstances. It is proven that working from home can be beneficial to folks' mental health and does not diminish productivity.

My position with the State of New Mexico can be performed via teleworking 97% of the time. There are occasions that I will need to come into the office, for the purposes of printing and mailing documents, or to pick up a vehicle to go out in the field.

I feel that limiting the time that I need to spend at the office reduces the risk of contracting any type of virus and becoming sick. Teleworking provides me some piece of mind for the health and safety of my family, myself and my co-workers.

In addition, I am a commuter from Bernalillo to Santa Fe. Not only does teleworking help me cut down on driving time (90 minutes on average both ways), but it also reduces my risk of being in a car accident. The extra 90 minuets per day I would save on driving time, allows me to spend more time with my family, which makes teleworking ideal for a more balanced family, work life.

Some jobs can not only be done via telework, but we have proven that productivity is actually higher and employee morale is higher when employees are provided a better work-life balance. It would be more prudent to save taxpayer dollars by not leasing unused space. Reasonable accommodations are needed for employees that have jobs conducive to teleworking, where they are able to provide services to their customers (proven by 2 years of successful teleworking and employee evaluations). I provide care for two incapacitated adults. I must be close by in case of emergency. Commuting adds almost 3 hours of unproductive time to my day, higher personal risk driving I-25 in rush hour, higher cost to my family in gas and wear and tear. My time is valuable and better spent during busy work times when I can work longer hours serving customers via teleworking rather than sitting in traffic. Work -life balance is crucial for my family and no longer exists without the telework option.

I believe that I am a success story for telework. I began working for the DOH ITSD in May 2021. I had to learn the ins and outs of my job while working remotely. This process went smoothly and today I am able to function in the same capacity as my coworkers with the same position I hold.

This has been my first telework position and telework has been extremely beneficial to my work/life balance. Without the benefit of telework, I will have to strongly consider if my job is right for me. For these reasons, I strongly support the continuation of telework and the statement below.

Hello:

Please reconsider rescinding the State of New Mexico Telework Policy. Rescinding our Telework Policy disadvantages many State employees and is a step backwards for the Land of Enchantment. In order to retain, attract, and compete with private industries, it is important to provide a Telework Policy so the State of New Mexico can recruit talented and skilled workers, especially in technical roles to support State of New Mexico policies.

Personally, I have benefitted from the State of New Mexico telework policy during the pandemic as my life was in transition, becoming a single mother to an infant and moving across the state. The flexibility that my teleworking arrangement has provided allowed me to continue working as a full-time employee when I may have otherwise left the workforce entirely due to lack of options for infant childcare.

I sincerely love my job with the State of New Mexico, but I will reconsider my position with the state if telework is no longer a benefit.

Please reconsider the decision to rescind all telework options and let's work together to find an option to allow telework and reduce our office space expenses!

Maybe our office spaces could make great temporary housing options for our homeless in need!

My co-workers and I are opposed to the blanket cancellation of the Non-Mandatory Telework Policy. My fellow state workers and I do not deserve to have our workplace flexibility taken away just because there is vacant office space and because we were told that the never-ending variants of Covid-19 are "just like the flu". Rescinding the policy caused immediate frustration in my office. And Covid-19 did not magically disappear.

Long Covid decimated my immune system for approximately 16 months. Because it hit me before vaccines were available and before doctors started discussing it, I had two doctors, a cardiologist and a PCP, dismiss my symptoms. I suffered through my myriad of symptoms but was able to remain productive at my job thanks to teleworking. In fact, I was more productive due to the movable transition from work to home, allowing me to start work earlier and answering emails and phone calls past my scheduled work hours. I was more invested than ever in my job, and I know that others felt the same. Also, the Cabinet Secretary of my agency made numerous video updates telling us there was no decrease in our productivity during full-time teleworking. To me, Covid-19 is scary, and any measures that minimize the risk to exposure should be implemented, if possible.

In addition to forcing people with immune deficiency into a mostly unmasked environment, chronic staffing shortages has been an ongoing issue at my agency since I started. Taking away workplace flexibility is counterproductive to recruiting and retaining quality employees. I always thought the goal was to increase the hiring pool.

Teleworking and hybrid work schedules enhance job satisfaction, loyalty, work quality, and work-life balance. Taking away a benefit to current and future employees just because that's what we used to do, or because it's time to "get back to work" is condescending and insulting. We've been working the entire time.

Telework has been absolutely beneficial in providing me the ability to work comfortably, without having to make commute drives every day, and breaks the monotony of always following the same routine. Telework has proven successful in ensuring that we reach a vast amount of people without having to waste money on needless travels and having to book overnight stays at hotels. There is no need to abolish telework and having this option has shown how the common 8-5 at office work is just a mindset that we have all grown up with, without realizing why

we have been subjected to this idea. The common idea that only “office work” is “work”, is fraudulent and successful companies know that productivity comes from being able to offer options to work environment. Working via telework has increased my productivity, has been cost saving, reduces carbon emissions (by having to drive less often), and is proof that productivity doesn't come from office work, but from the freedom of having the option to be able to work from the comfort of home.

For one, data show that telework employees are much happier, have better mental and physical health, and efficiency either stayed the same or improved (Owl Labs).

And second, this can also give the state, the possibility of reducing CO2 emissions by reducing commute time, which according to recent policies of New Mexico this is one of our goals; and most importantly this can help reduce lease office space and saving millions of dollars for the state. Why are we not looking into that direction, and instead are looking back at our old ways of working, which most people, and our environment are over-stressed. This is the future, and the best looking forward examples will save us from the past. Please make the right decision for all of us, the people that want to make New Mexico better.

A possible, few advantages to find yourself thinking about as this is being reviewed about the benefits of teleworking:

- 1) There surely must be a material amount of people (both in the state and in private sector) that work as hard if not harder at home and as a result have a strongly positive impact on work output completed
- 2) From an environmental perspective, along with inflation and high gas prices and current world situation, teleworking aids in reducing emissions...all this helping to improve air quality and with the money saved, allow state employees to have that bit more of income for other need goods (water, electricity, gas bills) and perhaps a secondary effect of purchasing from local merchants thereby helping to stimulate the New Mexico economy all the more and continuing to make this awesome state all the better....a small action at a time,.
- 3) COVID and continued strains are still among us and present a material threat especially to staff and/or with family that may have compromised immune systems. Resulting in increase in absenteeism and impacting productivity
- 4) With telework it enables work emergency situations can be address much faster than say staff that are out of the office after 5pm and before returning at 8am. As there is access at home, such situations can be remedied that much more effectively if you can think about it like that.
- 5) According to some research some benefits for the employer or state of NM would be:
 - a) More dedicated workers
 - b) Increased productivity (time saved commuting can be utilized for working earlier)
 - c) Higher work quality (Ex. Adobe and Microsoft noted increased innovation and positive employee interaction)
 - d) Few distraction (allowing workers to have periods of deep work which benefits the state)
 - e) Less travel fatigue (minimize illness, jet lag, travel time, being late)
 - f) General money savings (allow state employees to potentially relocate to more remote parts of this wonderful state as well as saving energy/water costs for the state)
 - g) Reduced stress levels
 - h) Higher employee job satisfaction which benefits the state by keeping knowledge base of proven staff as opposed to high turnaround and having to constantly retain which adds to delays and costs as well as productivity and quality
 - i) Better work/life balance = happier employees = more productive employee which also benefits the state
- 6) While some companies are wanting staff to return, there are many companies that are retaining teleworking as the benefits to the organization are reaped in resulting cost cutting, productivity, innovation

In closing, Thank you for allowing yourself to consider the benefits of continuing teleworking.

To whom it may concern,

I work for the Department of Transportation, and have been for the last 7 years. My job title is Engineering Technician III and I am very good at what I do, no matter where I am stationed. The transition from 'normal' work to telework during the early stages of the pandemic was a bit hectic for the first couple weeks. However after settling in, I and I am sure most people found the opportunity to work from home to be a pleasant and comfortable way to work. I turned a vacant room into a home office, which costed me out of pocket a lot of money. It is now a better office than what is provided to me by IT.

The cancellation of the telework policy, in my opinion, does nothing to advance or increase productivity. In fact, every quarter meeting we are told that productivity has been steady or increased from when we were required to report to office full time. As an infrastructure designer, I personally have little to no public involvement, I simply design roadways and drainage. There is no need to be in office full time, when my interactions are mostly only with my team. Our department is already short staffed and recruitment is not an easy task to find qualified employees. Telework is a true perk to a job that doesn't have many. As stated I could move on and make a lot more money in the private sector, but I truly enjoy working for the NMDOT with the current telework policy. I now work in office 3 days a week and telework at home 2 days a week. I hope to keep this schedule as my production is significant and does nothing to hold the department back. I am sure my supervisor would 100% agree.

Thank you for hearing me out, and please make the right decision.

Inflation and the record high price of fuel are two of reasons why It is also an added benefit to those of us who choose to work for the State at a lower wage and for fewer benefits than we could achieve in the private sector.

I am an Environmental Scientist at NMED and the sole RCRA Permit manager and project manager for the cleanup of hazardous waste at White Sands Missile Range, a federal facility that encompasses more land area than Rhode Island and Delaware combined. In any other State there would likely be at least 4 staff members assigned to such a facility. I work 99% of the time by myself and have more interactions with my counterpart at WSMR than I do with other NMED staff. Telework provides me a quieter setting with far fewer distractions than my office cubicle. Telework makes sense for my position.

NMED is understaffed and needs to recruit new staff to fill empty positions.

I have enjoyed the fact that I can come into the office two days a week and telework the other three days. For health reasons for me, teleworking has put less stress on my body in the fact that I have those three days of teleworking from home and do not have the stress of commuting into an office. When my sons have been sick, I have benefited of working from home and still being able to take care of them while getting my work done. In other states government workers telework all the time. The Federal government telework all the time. It helps with moral in the office and with co-workers.

At a time when others are experimenting with 4-day work weeks, New Mexico plans to eliminate an effective and popular telework policy? Do you want to move New Mexico forward or backward?

I personally have watched four coworkers walk off the job due to this decision and now we must ALSO absorb their caseloads, on-call shifts, and training facilitation shifts! This is unreasonable and will continue to exacerbate the state's high staff vacancy crisis!

Hello, I am a new state worker for NMPED, I am so excited to take on my new role and have the opportunity to make a large impact on the education and development of young new Mexicans through the humanities.

I recently accepted this job after 7 years of teaching specifically because it allowed for remote work. The mere fact that most state employees live outside of Santa Fe is a huge reason why our state employees have unique needs that require telework. Personally, my childcare options end before 6pm and a required commute to Santa Fe would demand that I resign the job I just accepted. I do not have the option to return to my old job so this would economically devastating for my family. Enforcing this demand would result in even more turnover and vacancies throughout the departments which would ultimately hurt New Mexicans. In conclusion please allow New Mexico state workers to telework, as this has proven to be effective. Thank you for your time and attention.

I am asking to be heard. The telework policy in place is working great for my family and I. My daughter is able to get to and from school with my spouse and I's telework schedule and without the telework opportunity, we do not know how she will continue at The Master's Program at SFCC. I also feel that working from home has helped me to concentrate more on my duties and be more available and productive, as I work consistently without distractions throughout the day.

With the constant change and threats of going back full time this continues to put great emotional and physical stress on my family. We have a 14 year old daughter that just started the Master's program at SFCC and having the two days telework has given us the help we need to get her to and from school. Without telework our daughter would be without transportation. Both my wife and I work for the State and our drive to work is around 40 minutes. Financially this is crippling to both of us as we have to drive both vehicles to accommodate our daughter and our work. We both work in IT and can do our jobs 100% from home. We are only coming in to warm a seat and add to the pollution. Please do not cancel telework. We will be forced to either change our daughter's school or look for telework jobs.

We are overworked, filling in for our coworkers who have left, out sick with Covid/Flu, and underpaid for the work we already do!

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my apprehension for ending the Telework agreement. Teleworking has allowed me to help with childcare for my granddaughter, returning to work full time will put a burden on family having to find full time childcare especially with the cost. Yes, there are many programs however these programs are limited and not always the best for our children/grandchildren.

I feel teleworking has lifted the morale in the office and given us all the opportunity to focus more on our health minds and families.

PLEASE HEAR US

DO NOT END THE TELEWORK POLICY

Good Morning,

I am reaching out to you today to share my opinion on the telework policy. My belief is that each department and bureau should be able to make the determination if telework is right for them. As a supervisor with the NMDOT, I have noticed that telework has not hindered the production of the staff that I supervise. NMDOT staff are currently able to telework 2 days a week. I believe this current schedule allows for a healthy work/life balance, while also ensuring that duties are complete in a timely manner. The ability to telework is a great benefit in any workplace. By removing the ability to telework, my belief is that state government will lose many dedicated and skilled staff. I also believe having the ability to telework will attract future high-qualified candidates.

Thank you for your time.

There are multiple reasons telework should be implemented and mandatory as state employees.

1) Commute; I travel to Santa Fe and expenses on my co-workers and myselfs vehicles do not justify the wage. Not to mention gas and vehicle maintenance. Furthermore, the rail runner is no longer a viable solution to commute. My co-workers vehicles are not safe (not to mention my own) in the Rail runners parking lots as we have had multiple thefts, and vandalisms of our personal vehicles. Lastly, roads are not always safe to travel. Mandating office time will never outweigh the safety of state employees via traffic, weather, and other road hazards.

2) Efficiency; Run the numbers, we have been more efficient than ever for two years working from home. WHY change that? If efficiency was down in the NMDOT department I could see a justification, but they're not. Employees have been completing their work, proving a need for brick and mortar office space is not necessary.

3) Covid; Enough said. We have had another surge in Covid and flu cases in the offices, (not to mention were coming into flu season) creating more work missed because of mandatory office attendance. Work from home, stay healthy. Simple.

4) Sociological/psychological/physical impact; Employees get to work from home, their place of solitude and peace. Employees are happier, leading to better quality of work, efficiency, family life, etc. Welcome to the 21st century, technology has proven the Henry Ford assembly line necessity to clock in and clock out of an office is archaic in nature. Implementing a work from home schedule, and demanding return to office when it makes no sense whatsoever, will only create distaste among employees, and vacant positions. Thus, leading to more jobs that no one wants to work, if a remote working option is not available. Adapt or go extinct. Time for NM to step forward and create places that New Mexicans want to work at and for, then the ladder stepping backwards.

Employees are just as productive from home and it saves the State money. It is a benefit that the State should keep going.
