

# The Land Grant Forum

Monthly Newsletter of the  
New Mexico Land Grant-Merced  
Movement

## Land Grants celebrate signing of HB 8 into Law



Land grants / *mercedes* from across the state gathered in Tierra Amarilla on March 2 to celebrate Governor Michelle Luján Grisham's signing of House Bill 8, the Land Grant-Merced Assistance Act. HB 8 created a fund which provides guaranteed revenue streams to qualified land grants. Distributions are based on each land grant's current revenue and will begin in 2024. Those with less revenue will receive a larger distribution from the Fund. The New Mexico Land Grant Council, the New Mexico Land

Grant-Merced Consejo, land grant boards of trustees and countless heirs and community leaders have worked on this legislation for nearly 20 years. State representatives and senators, members of the Rio Arriba County Commission and land grant leaders from across the state attended the official signing. Many land grant presidents spoke of about the struggles that have led up to this moment. "All the expenses we have so far have come out of the individual boards. We have to carry our own weight," Beverly Armijo, President of the Cristobal de La Serna Land Grant, said. They also shared the opportunities the Guaranteed Revenue Stream will allow their entities, such as acquiring property, building and maintaining community centers, and other various bills. "We'll be able to pay our utilities, instead of paying out of our pockets. We'll be able to put on more events for the youth and the children in our communities. We used to have a senior citizen center, and we'd like to be able to have events for those people. So we'd like to try and get the community back together," Jason Quintana, President of the Manzano Land Grant, said. The passing of this bill is a momentous moment, especially for those who have long been involved in the movement. "We started with nothing. Now we do have something and we're building on that. So, the future looks bright for land grants-mercedes. Right now, we're happy, and I'd like to thank everyone that's helped," Leonard Martinez, New Mexico Land Grant Council member and President of the San Joaquin del Rio de Chama, said.

### *Reintroducing the Land Grant Forum*

It has been over the year since the last issue of the *Land Grant Forum*, and we are happy to reintroduce this newsletter in a new format. The *Land Grant Forum* is transitioning from a quarterly to a monthly newsletter, delivered electronically to your inboxes at the beginning of each month. If you have an ideas for the newsletter, please reach out to Jacobo Baca at [jacobobaca@unm.edu](mailto:jacobobaca@unm.edu) or Anissa Baca at [nissa17@unm.edu](mailto:nissa17@unm.edu).



*Land grant leaders, heirs, legislators and local officials listen as Governor Luján Grisham (center, holding pen) prepares to sign HB 8. Seated to the left and right of the Governor are Rep. Matthew McQueen and Senator Liz Stefanics, the bill's primary sponsors.*

## Traditional Use Bill Reintroduced, heard in House subcommittee

House Resolution 5493, the Land Grants-Mercedes Traditional Use Recognition and Consultation Act, was heard in the House Natural Resource Committee's Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands on March 1, 2022. Introduced by Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández in July 2021, the Act is intended to provide for the recognition of traditional uses on federally managed lands by land grant-merced communities. It will also provide for greater consultation between federal land management agencies and land grant-merced boards of trustees. The Act would require federal land management agencies to issue guidance on how land grant-merced communities can access and use natural resources, for traditional use purposes, on federally managed lands located within their patented and/or historical-traditional use boundaries. "My ancestors lived in New Mexico on mercedes," said Rep. Leger Fernández at the hearing "Land grants are a part of our herencia." A companion bill, Senate Bill 2708, has been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Ben R. Luján.



### *Important Reminders*

- The next Land Grant Council Meeting will be held on **March 18, 2022** in Albuquerque. Visit [lgc.unm.edu](http://lgc.unm.edu) for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.
- The New Mexico Land Grant Merced Consejo quarterly meeting will be held on **March 26, 2022** in Carnuel, New Mexico.  
*Questions?*  
Contact the Consejo at [nmlgconsejo@gmail.com](mailto:nmlgconsejo@gmail.com)

*Are you a retired or active teacher interested in land grant & acequia education? The UNM Land Grant Studies Program is partnering with NMHU and the New Mexico Acequia Association to put on a small teachers institute. Stipends will be provided. Please contact Jacobo Baca at [jacobobaca@unm.edu](mailto:jacobobaca@unm.edu) for more*