Martinez signs outdoor-related bills

Written by Staff report
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SANTA FE — Gov. Susana Martinez signed a series of game and fish-related bills that will improve outdoor recreation and allow aquaponic farming of tilapia April 2.

"New Mexico has amazing outdoor recreation opportunities, especially hunting and fishing. They are a core part of our state's tourism industry and support our local economies throughout the state," Martinez said. "These bills will further improve these opportunities and help support a growing commercial sector in the state."

House Bill 202, sponsored by Representative Alonzo Baldonado (R-Los Lunas), allows certain minor game and fish violations to be disposed of by agreeing to pay a penalty without having to appear in court.

Senate Bill 231, sponsored by Senator Benny Shendo (D-Jemez Pueblo), allows the New Mexico Game Commission to recruit and train volunteers to assist with outdoor activities, such as teaching courses on fishing, shooting bows, and how to safely handle firearms. This will also allow volunteers to help in forest projects to improve wildlife habitat and other beneficial programs to assist game and fish species.

House Bill 201, sponsored by Representative Baldonado, allows aquaponic farming of tilapia, an increasingly popular method for raising fish and vegetables in a sustainable manner while conserving thousands of gallons of water compared to traditional methods of fish farming.

"I am very pleased that Governor Susana Martinez has chosen to sign this legislation into law. These laws are going to be beneficial to our wildlife resources and the citizens who appreciate them," said New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Assistant Director Chris Chadwick.

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"The end result will be more opportunities for people to learn how to safely enjoy the outdoors and legally grow a popular food fish in a sustainable manner that conserves our limited water resources."