

Senate passes SB9: The Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund

Written by gallupsun
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SANTA FE – Representatives of a broad coalition of New Mexico organizations praised the New Mexico State Senate Feb. 14 for passing SB9, The Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, that would create the state's first dedicated and long-term funding stream for land and water conservation. SB9 passed on a bipartisan 33-7 vote and now heads to the House of Representative for consideration

"Land, water, and wildlife stewardship is finally getting the love it deserves this session," , said. "Thanks to the bipartisan leadership of Sens. Wirth and Neville, New Mexico is well-positioned to make historic investments in our land, water, economy and culture through this critical fund. Now it's up to the House to rise to the challenge and pass this bill with enough funding to ensure a real impact in all 33 counties and tribal communities."

SB9, the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, would invest in existing state programs to leverage federal funds to protect New Mexico communities from wildfire, flood and drought, safeguard urban and rural water supplies, support rural and agricultural communities, and grow the outdoor recreation economy. The bill is sponsored by Sens. Steven Neville, Peter Wirth, and Rep. Nathan Small, building on the vision laid out by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in her executive budget recommendation.

"We're grateful the Senate has listened to the broad coalition of voices advocating for this fund, and we are encouraged by the strong bipartisan vote it received today," Lawrence Gallegos, New Mexico Field Organizer for the Western Landowners Alliance and Governing Board Member of the NM Food and Agriculture Policy Council, said. "From farmers and ranchers to acequia parciantes, private landowners, hunters and fishers, conservationists, and youth advocates, it's encouraging to see New Mexicans from all four corners speaking with one voice to say the time for investing in land and water conservation is now. The Enchantment Legacy Fund deserves the bipartisan support it is receiving and must remain a priority this session."

The Fund is a bipartisan product of five years of negotiations among a broad coalition of legislators, state agencies, community stakeholders and non-governmental organizations. This

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coalition continues to grow, with more than 30 organizations across the political and conservation spectrum now supporting the Fund. They continue to advocate for at least \$350 million to ensure the Fund can produce enough annual returns to be self-sustaining.

More information can be found at enchantmentfund.org.

