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House GOP calls for Emergency Extraordinary Legislative Session

Santa Fe – House Republican Whip Rod Montoya today formally requested that the Legislative Council Services draft a petition to convene the New Mexico Legislature in an Extraordinary Legislative Session as soon as possible in order to allocate some \$1.75 billion dollars in federal COVID-19 relief. Governor Lujan Grisham vetoed more than \$1.2 billion in federal relief funds that were approved by the Legislature earlier this year, asserting she has sole discretion in spending these federal COVID relief dollars. An extraordinary special session called for by the Legislature would allow the legislative branch an opportunity to either override the Governor’s vetoes or create a process where an agreement could be reached between the Legislature and the Governor as to how these federal dollars should be spent and then the Legislature would vote to approve such an agreement.

Additionally, House Republicans have been made aware of a series of closed-door meetings between Democrat legislative leaders and the Governor, as well as secretive memos circulating the Capitol Building, regarding a “plan” to spend the \$1.75 billion the state treasury recently received from the federal government. The behind closed-door meetings and secretive memos are circumventing open-government and transparency efforts that both the House GOP leadership and the public have been demanding for years.

House Republicans strongly believe that the State Legislature must have a voice in deciding how this \$1.75 billion in federal COVID relief should be spent and any agreements between Democrat leaders and the Governor’s office should be subject to full public transparency. The state’s constitution provides “power of the purse” to the Legislature and in past years there have been bipartisan efforts made to ensure that the State Constitution’s separation of powers is not eroded by secretive deal making.

The petition is being drafted by Legislative Council Services, and would need three-fifths support from each chamber or 42 House Members and 25 Senators. The video of today’s council meeting can be viewed [here](#) (timestamp is approx. 3:02pm)

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