



Office of the Governor

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Bianca Ortiz-Wertheim joins Governor's infrastructure team

SANTA FE – On Thursday, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham announced the appointment of Bianca Ortiz-Wertheim as the Director of Infrastructure and Implementation. She comes into the role from the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM), where she served as the cabinet secretary since May of 2020.

In this new role, Ortiz-Wertheim will work directly with Senior Infrastructure Advisor Martin Chávez, as well as broadband and water advisors Matt Schmit and Mike Hamman, to organize and oversee major investments in New Mexico's infrastructure following the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) signed into law last year. A former chief of staff for U.S. Senator Tom Udall, she brings unique experience and insight into federal logistics to this position.

As cabinet secretary at DHSEM, she managed the distribution of more than \$100 million in federal grants to New Mexico's communities, funding investments in irrigation systems, electrical grids, and other critical infrastructure. Under her leadership, DHSEM has also played a vital role in the fight against COVID-19.

"Bianca has a wealth of knowledge of federal programs and funding and a strong network of relationships across New Mexico," said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. "We were one of the first states to appoint an infrastructure advisor, and our state is truly leading the nation by building a team dedicated to getting these federal dollars out the door quickly and efficiently for transformative projects around the state."

"During my tenure at DHSEM, I've seen firsthand the ways that weak and unmaintained infrastructure can jeopardize the health, safety, and economic prosperity of our communities," said **Ortiz-Wertheim**. "With that experience, I know there is so much potential to positively impact the lives of my fellow New Mexicans, and I am honored and excited to take on this new role."

"Bianca has worked at every level of government, advocating for the people of New Mexico and building relationships across our cities, counties, and tribes," said Infrastructure Advisor

Martin Chávez. “We have a tremendous task before us, implementing this once-in-a-generation investment in our state’s infrastructure, and I’m delighted to have Bianca in our corner.”

The IIJA is expected to deliver more than \$3.7 billion in funding for New Mexico, including \$2.5 billion for federal-aid highway programs, as well as \$38 million for wildfire prevention, \$100 million to improve access to broadband, and \$355 to ensure that every New Mexican has access to clean drinking water, among other provisions.

The governor’s Deputy Chief of Staff Diego Arencón will serve as the acting secretary of DHSEM until a replacement is selected by the governor.

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