



Stephanie Garcia Richard, Land Commissioner  
State of New Mexico

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 4, 2020

Contact:

Angie Poss, Assistant Commissioner of Communications

505.470.2965

[aposs@slo.state.nm.us](mailto:aposs@slo.state.nm.us)

## **Commissioner Garcia Richard Approves Western Spirit Wind Development**

*Project will benefit public schools with over \$16 million in revenue over life of project*

**SANTA FE, NM** – Keeping her promise to increase renewable buildout on state trust land, Commissioner of Public Lands, Stephanie Garcia Richard, today executed five leases for the Western Spirit Wind development to parent company Pattern Renewables 2 LP. Pattern was the winning bidder in a February public auction for the right to develop the 16,442 acres located in Torrance County and Lincoln Counties.

Pattern paid the State Land Office a total up-front bonus bid of \$395,000 as a requirement of the public auction. They were also required to provide bonding coverage for the eventual decommissioning of the turbines. Based on provisions of the leases, the Land Office estimates the minimum revenue to New Mexico public schools will be over \$16 million during the life of the project.

“At the State Land Office, we continue to do our part to diversify the economy by working with renewable energy firms that share our common goal of advancing New Mexico’s renewable energy future,” Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard said. “The recent oil crisis, brought on by a global oil price war and compounded by COVID-19, has only strengthened my dedication to helping New Mexico move away from our reliance on fossil fuels. For that and many other reasons, the Western Spirit wind project is a win-win-win. Our public schools win, because this project will directly benefit them financially to the tune of over \$16 million. Our state wins, because we create high paying construction jobs, as well as long term jobs managing these sites. And last but not least,

we win by making a dent in New Mexico's carbon emissions, furthering the state's efforts to be carbon neutral by 2045.”

29 or more wind turbines will be built for the project, generating at least 76 MW of wind energy annually, enough to power over 15,000 homes annually. The project will connect to the forthcoming Western Spirit transmission line.

The Western Spirit project represents the eighth wind energy lease signed by Commissioner Garcia Richard since taking office a year and a half ago. When completed, wind farms on state trust land will help New Mexico lead the way in wind energy generation. Combined, the forthcoming Western Spirit, La Joya, Great Divide, and Gladstone wind projects will increase New Mexico's MW capacity by 414, as well as increasing revenue from renewable projects by over \$80 million over the life of the projects.

Commissioner Garcia Richard's commitment to renewable energy includes her creation last year of the first ever Office of Renewable Energy at the State Land Office. That office is currently working to process over 40 applications for new solar and wind energy projects on state trust land. When processed, these applications will help the Land Office exceed goals of tripling the amount of energy generated on state trust land through renewable projects.

***In fiscal year 2019, the State Land Office earned over \$1 billion from leasing state trust lands for a wide variety of uses, including ranching and farming, renewable energy, business development, and mineral development. These earnings support 22 land trust beneficiaries, which include public schools throughout the state, seven universities and colleges, the School for the Deaf, the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, three hospitals, correctional facilities, water conservation projects, and public building construction and repair.***