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April 9, 2021

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Governor Vetoes Federal Funding Earmarks in State Budget

Members of the Senate Finance Committee respond to apparent “power grab”

SANTA FE – According to media reports, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham today vetoed more than \$1 billion in legislative earmarks from the state’s budget bill, House Bill 2. With New Mexico slated to receive approximately \$1.6 billion in federal stimulus funds, the Legislature earmarked a large portion of those federal dollars to shore up the state’s unemployment fund and to provide for road repairs and construction. In response to the Governor’s veto, Republican members of the Senate Finance Committee released the following statements:

“The Legislature is the appropriating body and we took steps this year to preserve that authority,” said **Senator William Sharer** (District 1-San Juan). “We are the ones directly responsible to the citizens for how taxpayer dollars are spent and I am disappointed in what appears to be yet another power grab by this Governor. These earmarks were put in place to safeguard against unsustainable spending on new programs and initiatives that may go unfunded when federal money dries up. The Governor’s veto is not only irresponsible – it very well may be unconstitutional.”

“This was a bad budget and this action makes it even worse” said **Senator Crystal Diamond** (District 35-Dona Ana, Hidalgo, Luna, and Sierra). “I voted against this bill because it relied heavily on non-recurring revenue to justify a massive growth in government. Nonetheless, the Legislature ultimately passed the measure and sent it to the Governor because that is our job. Now the Governor is choosing to take the appropriating power away from us so she can again spend without legislative oversight. If we allow this happen, we are making it known that the Legislature is no longer an equal branch of government, but one that continues to cede more and more of its power to the Executive.”

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