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Contact: Matt Garcia-Sierra, m.garciasierra@nmlegis.gov, 505.205.5486

GOP Leader Townsend blasts MLG and Forest Service for reckless disregard for safety of New Mexicans

Santa Fe – House Republican Floor Leader Jim Townsend (Artesia) today issued a statement condemning U.S. Forest Service and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham for their handling of the Hermits Peak Fire.

Rep. Townsend is denouncing a decision by the United Forest Service to proceed with a controlled burn in unsafe weather conditions, which led to devastation in northern New Mexico.

“The United States Forest Service’s decision to proceed with a controlled burn knowing the conditions were incredibly dangerous shows a reckless disregard for the safety of New Mexicans and their homes,” said House Republican Leader Jim Townsend (R-Artesia). “The US Forest Service must be held accountable for their actions. I think New Mexicans need accountability from the Governor to understand why her administration is not aggressively calling on the Forest Service to explain why so many controlled burns were not postponed due to the heavy winds and dry weather across the state. I applaud our fire fighters and emergency responders, and city leaders for taking the lead and keeping New Mexicans safe and I hope that the emergency orders issued last week will provide them with ample support to provide relief to their communities.”

Leader Townsend is calling for transparency and accountability from the US Forest Service for the damage that was caused as a result of its own negligence. **Rep. Townsend continued**, *“It has become increasingly clear that the federal government has been operating in an unsafe manner when it comes to forest management. New Mexicans need to be able to trust that the federal government has their safety in mind and that the reckless actions taken by USFS do not go unanswered in this latest incident.”*

Rep. Townsend concluded, *“The entire Republican caucus shares great concern for the many families that have lost their homes or property, and livestock in the destructive path of these fires. We are ready to help in any way we can, and New Mexicans can call on any Republican lawmaker to advocate for them or provide resources as they move forward.”*

Background info: https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/questions-raised-after-controlled-burn-near-las-vegas-n-m-goes-out-of-control/article_74090c4c-b694-11ec-9a89-538ab0f85845.html

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