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NEW MEXICO LEADS IN GREEN JOBS BILL PACKAGE

(SANTA FE, NM) – The New Mexico Legislature will be hearing a green jobs bill package that could make New Mexico a leader in the green economy. The proposed legislation (SB 420, SB 318 and HB 622) will provide resources for schools, tribes, communities, and businesses to train a local workforce in 21st century green collar trades and attract sustainable green industries to New Mexico.

Green industries are those that enhance environmental quality by reducing pollution or producing products using sustainable processes and materials. Typical green jobs include solar panel installation, retrofitting existing buildings, water purification, bio-diesel production, organic gardening and green manufacturing.



“Because New Mexico is ranked #2 for its solar resources and #12 in the US for its wind resources, we are uniquely positioned to lead the emerging green economy,” says Dr. John Fogarty, Executive Director for New Energy Economy.

House Speaker Ben Lujan is sponsoring HB 622— (Green Jobs Bonding Act—that would approve up to \$20 million from a state revenue bond and have no impact on the general fund, to provide financial support for higher education institutions to create green job training programs. Priority for funding will be given to programs that help disadvantaged populations such as low-income and rural constituencies.

In conjunction, Senator Eric Griego’s bills will promote job creation and economic development by providing appropriate incentives for green industries to bring their businesses into New Mexico. SB 318—Development Training Funds for Green Jobs— if enacted will appropriate a minimum of \$1 million dollars from Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) funds to aid green

businesses, particularly small businesses, in supporting a new workforce.

Sen. Griego is also sponsoring SB 420 —Severance Tax Investment in Green Industries —which would allot up to \$15 million of the Severance Tax Permanent Fund for New Mexico industries that provide green jobs to local residents.

Dr. Sheila Ortego, President of the Santa Fe Community College, commented that “this legislation will create the necessary support that will allow New Mexico to leverage tens of millions of dollars of federal funds from the Green Jobs Act and the Congressional economic stimulus package. There is tremendous interest in our existing curriculum in green building and renewable energy, with students of all ages signing up to re-focus their career or start a new one. We look forward to breaking ground on our new Sustainable Technologies Center this August, where we will be able to meet demand for even more classes and partner with business and industry in making Santa Fe and New Mexico one of the top places for green jobs.”

“Altogether, the proposed green jobs package fits well with the goals of Gov. Richardson’s Green Jobs Cabinet and supports President Obama’s oft-stated interest in promoting clean renewable energy,” adds Fogarty.

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INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Contact:

MARSHALL PLAN

Jennifer Marshall

505-231-1776

jennifer@jmarshallplan.com

www.jmarshallplan.com