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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes
Deputy Secretary Jon Clark

EDD Applauds Release of Spaceport Authority Audit *state moves ahead with management changes*

SANTA FE, N.M. – Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said today the state is already acting on key findings from an investigative report regarding New Mexico's Spaceport America by asking the Spaceport Authority to implement procedures that fix long-neglected transparency and oversight concerns.

The report was released today by the Office of the State Auditor Brian Colón. The review indicates “a severe breakdown of internal controls that resulted in possible waste and abuse of taxpayer funds,” according to the Auditor’s Government Accountability Office. The report itself details improper procurement, excessive travel spending, and a lack of financial oversight going back several years at the Spaceport Authority, which governs the 18,000-acre Spaceport America facility.

Secretary Keyes became aware of management issues at the Spaceport in early 2020. The state placed former Spaceport CEO Daniel Hicks on administrative leave after a formal whistleblower complaint was filed on June 12, 2020. Five days later, the state hired The McHard Firm to do the independent audit.

“The Economic Development Department supported by the Governor moved quickly to investigate allegations of impropriety at the Spaceport,” Secretary Keyes said. “It is now time to move forward and repair the breakdowns that allowed these abuses to happen.”

Colón also credited Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Secretary Keyes for their leadership and transparency in “taking immediate action to address the alleged wrongdoing.”

Keyes assumed the chair of the Spaceport Authority Board in May of 2020.

Scott McLaughlin has been serving as the interim head of Spaceport America since late June. McLaughlin has been an experienced engineer who also serves as operations director. He has continued to recruit business at the Spaceport, create jobs, and oversee test launches, maintenance, and site development.

McLaughlin will continue to lead the Spaceport America until the Authority can hire a permanent director.

The Spaceport Authority is set to meet next on Dec. 2.

The McHard investigation is now available at the website for the [Office of the State Auditor](#).

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