



# NEW MEXICO

## OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

**Contact:** Michelle Simon  
[Michelle.Simon@edd.nm.gov](mailto:Michelle.Simon@edd.nm.gov)  
(505) 439-2320

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Cabinet Secretary-Designate Rob Black  
Deputy Cabinet Secretary Isaac Romero  
ORD Director Karina Armijo

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### **New Mexico Celebrates Passage of the EXPLORE Act: A Landmark for Outdoor Recreation and Economic Growth**

**SANTA FE, N.M.** — The New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division applauds the historic passage of the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act by the U.S. Senate. This legislation ushers in a new era for the \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy, further bolstering New Mexico's thriving outdoor industry and communities.

The EXPLORE Act, which now awaits President Biden's signature, represents a watershed moment for outdoor recreation in New Mexico and nationwide. By modernizing policies, expanding access to public lands, and promoting sustainable recreation, the act positions outdoor recreation as a cornerstone of economic growth, public health, and quality of life.

Recent data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) highlights outdoor recreation's outsized role in New Mexico's economy. The industry contributed over \$3.2 billion to the state's GDP in 2023, representing 2.4% of the state's total economic output and supporting over 29,000 jobs. Activities like hiking, fishing, hunting, and skiing draw millions of visitors annually, fueling local businesses and creating opportunities in rural and urban communities.

"The passage of the EXPLORE Act is a monumental achievement for New Mexico," New Mexico Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary-Designate Rob Black said. "It validates the importance of our outdoor economy, ensures equitable access to our unparalleled public lands, and empowers communities to thrive through sustainable recreation opportunities. This legislation aligns perfectly with our mission to build a healthier, more vibrant, and inclusive New Mexico."

Supporters of the EXPLORE Act expect the initiative to enhance access to New Mexico's iconic landscapes, strengthen local economies by supporting small businesses and rural communities, modernize outdoor infrastructure, promote equity through initiatives like the Outdoor Equity Fund, and bolster resilience to climate challenges, ensuring long-term sustainability for outdoor assets and communities.

"As the EXPLORE Act advances to the president's desk, the Outdoor Recreation Division stands ready to collaborate with federal, state, Tribal, and local partners to fully leverage the opportunities this legislation provides," Karina Armijo, director of the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, said. "Together, we will champion initiatives that ensure every New Mexican can enjoy and benefit from the outdoors."

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#### **About the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division**

The Outdoor Recreation Division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department is dedicated to enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, fostering economic development, and ensuring equitable access to New Mexico's natural resources. By supporting initiatives like the Outdoor Equity Fund and the



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New Mexico Economic Development Department | 1100 South St. Francis Dr Joseph M.  
Montoya Building | Santa Fe, NM 87505-4147 US

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