



DIRECTOR AND SECRETARY
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To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Guidance for Public Meetings and Public Rule Hearings Conducted during the COVID-19 public health emergency

During this extraordinary situation as New Mexico addresses the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Game Commission (the "Commission") supports the use of alternative formats of collective gathering to hold public meetings, public rule hearings and to receive input from the public. This is due to Executive Order 2020-004, where the Governor declared a public health emergency on March 11, 2020, which was extended by Executive Order 2020-022 on April 6, 2020.

A March 23, 2020 Public Health Order prohibited mass gatherings, which is defined as "any public [] gathering that brings together five (5) or more individuals in a single room or connected space...". The Secretary of the State Department of Health issued the March 23, 2020 Public Health Order that prohibits traditional in-person public meetings where more than five (5) persons may be present during this public health emergency.

To that end, we are taking this opportunity to inform you that the Commission is utilizing audiovisual teleconferencing platforms to conduct its public meetings and public rule hearings. In addition, the public meetings and public rule hearings will be live streamed via the internet on the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish website at <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/webcast/> and other services. The public may provide comments to the Commission in a variety of formats, including written, email, and verbal/ oral.

All meeting notices and agenda are posted at the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish website at <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/meeting-agendas/>, while the rule hearing notices and information is posted at the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish website at <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/proposals-under-consideration/>.

Written Comments

Any written comments submitted should be limited similarly to verbal/ oral comments of two minutes when read aloud. All written comments will be read aloud for inclusion during the appropriate public comment section of the public meeting or public rule hearing.

Public Meeting: Written comments addressing specific public meeting agenda items may be sent via email with the subject "SGC Public Comments" to ipsa@state.nm.us or by mail to New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Attn: SGC Public Comments, P.O. Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87504.

Public Rule Hearings: Generally, written comments addressing specific public rule hearings are due by 1pm, two days before the day of the public rule hearing and should be submitted via the instructions listed in the public notice of the appropriate Public Rule Hearing on the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish website at <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/proposals-under-consideration/>.

Please note, Section 14-4-5.3 NMSA 1978 states, "at the public rule hearing, members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to submit data, views or arguments orally or in writing ... All public hearings shall be conducted in a fair and equitable manner."

Verbal/ Oral Comments

Public Meeting or Public Rule Hearing: Persons planning to provide verbal/ oral comments during the public meeting and/ or public rule hearing are encouraged to pre-register through the appropriate audiovisual teleconferencing platform. Alternatively, a person who decides to provide a verbal/ oral comment during the public meeting and/ or public rule hearing may indicate so through the appropriate audiovisual teleconferencing platform before the conclusion of the public comment periods. Detailed instructions for providing verbal/ oral comments are listed on the notice for the public hearing at <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/webcast/>.

This guidance will remain in place until the declaration of public health emergency (Executive Order 2020-004) is lifted by the Governor or at the election of the Commission.

 4/24/2020
Sharon Salazar Hickey, Chair