

Jos Lesscher
Chair



Jess Lewis
Vice Chair

**NEW MEXICO
STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes

New Mexico State Emergency Response Commission

August 11th, 2026 | 1:00 PM – 3:06 PM | 3407 Juan Tabo Blvd, Albuquerque, NM 87111

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 PM by the Chair. The meeting was recorded.

II. Roll Call

A. Present:

1. Jos Lesscher, Chair
2. Jess Lewis, Vice Chair
3. Commissioner Fitzherbert
4. Commissioner Onsurez
5. Commissioner Sanders
6. Commissioner Overpeck
7. Lisa Coleman, NMDHSEM
8. Tessa Snyder, NMDHSEM
9. Joshua Valdez, DHSEM
10. Henry Rand, DHSEM
11. Zach Wachter, EMNRD
12. Robert Eggimann, NMDOH BHEM
13. Tim Yackey, NMDOH BHEM
14. Adele McKenzie, NMDOH
15. Russell Lashley, NMED
16. Larry Kemp, NMDOT
17. Brenden Harvey, Artesia Fire Department
18. Chief Kat Basile, Albuquerque Fire Rescue
19. Michael Archuleta, City of Albuquerque OEM
20. Tomas Benavidez, Sandia OEM
21. Cynthia Rivera, Sandia OEM
22. Kenneth Martinez, Bernalillo County OEM
23. Paul Herrera, Bernalillo County OEM
24. Lance Fresquez, Los Alamos County OEM
25. Sarah Gillen, Valencia County OEM
26. Bobby Lucero, Taos County OEM
27. David Townsend, Luna County OEM
28. Gaylord Siow, Pueblo of Laguna OEM
29. Jennifer Armendariz, Eddy County OEM

30. Mark Ortega, Taos County OEM
31. Rosalie Guest, Rio Rancho OEM
32. Ruthann Kelly, Curry County OEM
33. Sarah Gillen, Valencia County OEM
34. Nadine Molinari, Rio Rancho OEM
35. Bill Kardokus, Quay County OEM
36. Erich Wuerschling, NASA OEM
37. Johnny Montiel, Roosevelt County OEM
38. Scott Fuller, Grant County OEM
39. Ben Thomas, New Mexico Tech University
40. Jeff Hankins, BNSF Railway Hazmat
41. Ryan Berg, Los Alamos National Laboratory
42. John Wilks III, Veterans for Peace/The Plutonium Caravan Project
43. Janet Greenwald, Public Citizen
44. Peter Finlay, NM VOAD
45. Sharon, unknown affiliation

B. Quorum was established.

III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve previous meeting minutes and agenda as written; motion passed unanimously.

IV. Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees

- A. **Chair Report:**
 - Nothing to report.
- B. **Vice Chair Report:**
 - Concerned about preparedness around clandestine lab response and wants information about AAR results from the Mountainair incident across participating entities. Hazmat Coordinator was tasked to provide all relevant AAR and other after-action discussions regarding the Mountainair event to the Commissioners.
- C. **Hazardous Materials Safety Board (HMSB)/ Training:**
 - The sub-committee held a kick-off meeting in mid-July; next meeting is scheduled for end of August. The group described roles that their agency has in the hazmat preparedness and response continuum and other partners that should be invited to the HMSB, including private partners and Poison Control.
- D. **Policy/Legislature/Bylaws Standing Committee:**
 - Commissioner Onsurez helped identify committee members and will send the Hazmat Coordinator dates to propose to the group to have the kick-off meeting.
- E. **LEPC Standing Committee:**
 - LEPC non-compliance letter was completed and the list of county commissioners and emergency managers compiled. Information was forwarded to the Chair and will be emailed out within the week.

F. Finance Committee:

- Motion passed unanimously to accept amended by-laws that remove the Finance Committee as a sub-committee of the SERC.

VI. Old Business

- A. Vice Chair agreed to act as the oversight for the HMSB sub-committee and for the group to start meeting to rewrite the Hazardous Materials Emergency Response (HMER) Plan. The Vice Chair requested Zach Wachter from EMNRD and Stephen Connolly from NMED be invited as members of the sub-committee.
- B. Commissioner Onsurez agreed to act as the oversight for the Policy sub-committee. The group decided that they would focus on writing policy language and working with DHSEM or the RHMC or legislators directly to propose a Tier II fee structure policy change.
- C. The Hazmat Coordinator provided a brief on what are resources from rail companies for Incident Commanders during hazardous materials incidents, including the rail emergency lines and Emergency Operations Centers, hazmat response trailers, and the AskRail app for Commodity Flow information.
- D. Motion passed to have OCD present at a future meeting on their work in oil and gas incidents and on orphan oil wells.
- E. Hazmat Coordinator reported on the development of an “At-Risk Facility Working Group,” which includes members of different state agencies and is intended to support locally identified facilities which are active or potential hazmat incident threats.
- F. During public comment, Chief Pairett from Gallup Fire discussed concerns around reimbursement and support for hazmat teams that are serving their region. His sentiments were reinforced by Chief Basile from AFR and Chief Miller from Farmington Fire.
- G. Hazmat Coordinator gave updates on the HMEP grant; the Y2 application was submitted and sub-grantees selected for Y1 award (2026-2027). Sub-recipients include City of Farmington, Dona Ana County, Luna County, and Pueblo of Acoma.

VII. New Business

A. 2025 SERC Annual Report Content Discussion

- 1. The Hazmat Coordinator provided the draft SERC Annual Report for 2025. The commission unanimously approved the draft report.

B. WIPP Transit Route Training (Presentation)

- 1. Zach Wachter from EMNRD WIPP Transit Route Training Program and Tim Yackey from DOH BHEM, spoke on training provided to first responders and hospitals on the WIPP Transit Route. These trainings include Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT), patient decontamination at hospitals, and service animal decontamination training.
- 2. The program also helps provide radiologic monitors to response agencies on the route.

C. Hazardous Materials Storage and Waste Disposal (Presentation)

1. Ben Thomas from NM Tech reviewed cases of unsafe hazardous chemical storage at the university and the protocols he is using to improve chemical safe storage and waste disposal.
2. He emphasized that he remains the only hazardous materials safety and waste management person at the university, which limits the university's ability to maintain a safe environment for students, staff, and the surrounding community.

D. Introduction to the Plutonium Caravan Project (Presentation)

1. John Wilks from Veterans for Peace and the Plutonium Caravan Project reviewed the purpose and interest areas of the advocacy groups, including supporting policy efforts of the SERC to improve hazardous materials emergency preparedness, response, and recovery across the state.
2. Commissioner Onsurez requested a copy of the testimony, which Mr. Wilks will send to the Hazmat Coordinator to send to the Commission.

E. Public Comments

1. Janet Greenwald asked for answers to some clarifying questions regarding local level preparedness to respond to WIPP Transit Route emergencies and for hospitals to provide chelating agents to exposed patients. She asked about the status of LEPCs in Taos and Rio Arriba counties, the status of LEPC non-compliance letters being sent out, and the status of Regional Hazmat Teams.
 - The Vice Chair, Hazardous Materials Coordinator-Tessa Snyder, Robert Eggimann from NMDOH BHEM, and Zach Wachter reviewed training efforts and Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) protocols for requesting and receiving specialized medications.
2. The Hazmat Coordinator gave a brief on the status of the HMEP grant, including the continued work towards training and planning activities of sub-grantees, an upcoming webinar that will review how to apply for the HMEP sub-grant (September), and the opening of the Y2 HMEP sub-grant in October for the period of performance 1/1/2027-6/30/2028.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to occur at the Ruidoso EOC during the week of the New Mexico Association of Emergency Management Professionals (NMAEMP) Symposium in October.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

- Motion passed unanimously.
- Meeting adjourned at 15:03.