



Stephanie Garcia Richard, Commissioner of Public Lands
State of New Mexico

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Land Office, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and Chaves County Flood Control Commission Team-Up to Repair Damaged Roswell Flood Levee

SANTA FE, NM – SANTA FE, NM – The New Mexico State Land Office on Monday granted an emergency right of entry permit to the Chaves County Flood Control Commission for the agency to make repairs to a breach in a levee located on state trust land. The breach has caused flooding into streets, impacting homes and businesses, in the City of Roswell. The right of entry allowed the Flood Commission to access the land to make repairs, which began immediately and concluded Tuesday morning. Repairs had previously been impossible due to safety concerns caused by the severity of the flooding.

“Flood Commission staff were able to patch the area quickly, and what we have in place will turn the water for now,” Chaves County Flood Control Superintendent Richard Smith said. “The area is in need of permanent repairs and we are working with the State to make sure we get that done as quickly as possible.”

Access to state trust land through right of entry typically requires permits and fees. Commissioner of Public Lands Stephanie Garcia Richard worked with Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) Secretary Bianca Ortiz-Wertheim to expedite the permit process and waive associated fees.

“In cases of emergencies like the flooding that took place in Roswell, the State Land Office will always act quickly and accordingly to keep New Mexicans safe,” Commissioner Garcia Richard said. “We are grateful to the Governor and the Secretary for working to make funds available to the community, and we commend the Chaves County Flood Commission for getting in to patch the levee as soon as it was safe for them to do so.”

In response to this severe flooding, Governor Lujan Grisham has signed executive orders declaring states of emergency for both the City of Roswell and Chaves County, where the damaged levee is located. Together, these orders provide DHSEM with \$1.5 million to assist local governments with recovery efforts.

“Repairing this levee is critical to helping the Roswell area recover from this disaster,” said Secretary Ortiz-Wertheim. “This emergency is an example of why it is so important to have local, state, and federal partners all working together on a coordinated response. Through these relationships, we can ensure that responders have the tools and intelligence they need to conduct recovery operations safely and efficiently. Our department is proud to work with agencies like the State Land Office to help Southeast New Mexico recover from this disaster.”

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Under the leadership of Commissioner of Public Lands Stephanie Garcia Richard, the New Mexico State Land Office has seen back-to-back years of revenue over \$1 billion. Over 13 million acres of state trust land are leased for a variety of uses, including ranching and farming, renewable energy, business development, mineral development, and outdoor recreation. The money earned from leasing activity supports 22 beneficiaries – New Mexico public schools, seven universities and colleges, the School for the Deaf, the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, three hospitals, water and land conservation projects, and public building construction and repair.