

From: myvoice@oneclickpolitics.com
To: [emnrd-parkscomments](#), EMNRD
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Lack of transparency and citizen considerations is unacceptable
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 3:47:06 PM

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Re: Lack of transparency and citizen considerations is unacceptable

Dear Public Comment,

The lack of transparency within the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) is very disappointing. The timing of the publication of the proposed fee changes immediately following the conclusion of the legislative session thereby circumventing the legislative process could be seen as an attempt to avoid scrutiny, open debate and involvement of the people's representatives. This bypass of checks and balances further erodes the people's trust in the government. I understand that the Division operates as an enterprise agency and is expected to generate a significant portion of its budget through park fees. However, it is important to recognize that New Mexico's population is generally lower income compared to other states, and many individuals and families already face financial constraints. Increasing fees without considering the financial circumstances of residents risks excluding those who rely on state parks for affordable outdoor recreation opportunities. The elimination of the Annual Camping Pass raises concerns. While it may be true that annual passes are not common in other states, their availability in New Mexico has provided a more affordable option for frequent park visitors. Removing this option could deter individuals and families from visiting state parks regularly, ultimately reducing overall park usage and revenue generation. Similarly, increasing motorboat registration fees and adding fees for launching paddle craft could limit access to water-based recreation for those who cannot afford the additional costs. The decision to raise fees contradicts the principles of fairness and equity, and is an attack on social justice, especially considering the state's healthy financial position. It raises questions about the state's priorities and whether it is truly acting in the best interests of its citizens by choosing to burden them with unnecessary financial obligations. Thank you for your service to the citizens of the state, and I respectfully request you keep the citizens in mind and do not approve the proposed rule changes.

Sincerely,
Stephen Thomas
stthomas510@gmail.com
10310 Hardrock Rd Las Cruces, NM 88011 Constituent

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