



**NEWS ADVISORY  
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**STATE REPRESENTATIVE & CONSERVATION ATTORNEY MATTHEW MCQUEEN  
LAUNCHES BID FOR NEW MEXICO COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS**

(Galisteo, NM) – State Representative and conservation attorney **Matthew McQueen** launched his bid today to run in the 2026 election for **New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands**. The six-term legislator cited the need for strong, experienced leadership during these unprecedented times of attacks on our public lands and conservation efforts.

“Our public lands and environmental and conservation rules are under attack,” said McQueen. “The job of Commissioner of Public Lands is an important and complex responsibility. This is a \$2 billion+ annual revenue-generating agency to benefit New Mexico’s schools, universities, and hospitals, and other critical beneficiaries. I have dedicated my career to this intricate and complex field of work. And, I have the proven record of standing up to bullies and corruption.”

The New Mexico State Land Office manages 9 million surface and 13 million mineral acres across every county in the state. This state trust land was allocated to New Mexico by the federal government under the Ferguson Act of 1898 and the Enabling Act of 1910. The mission of the NM State Land Office is to use state trust land to raise revenue for public schools, universities, and hospitals as well as other public institutions. Revenue is raised through lease agreements for oil, gas, and mineral exploration, business and commercial operations including renewable energy projects, agriculture and livestock grazing, and outdoor recreation.

“In effect, the State Land Office is the largest real estate firm in the state,” said McQueen. “I commit to build upon the successes of our current Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard, and those who preceded her like Ray Powell Jr. and Jim Baca, to raise even more revenue for our state institutions while embracing conservation and protecting our public lands. I have spent my career on what this agency does and commit to diversify income sources, enhance community development, and explore innovative affordable housing options.”

95% of the money raised by the State Land Office goes to fund New Mexico's public education, including public schools across the state, the Youth Diagnostic Development Center, the New Mexico Military Institute, the New Mexico School for the Deaf, the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and our state's higher education institutions.

"In addition to the legal, conservation, and land management responsibilities of the office, I am passionate about the main mission of the agency – to raise funds for public education," said McQueen. "I have long fought to use the Land Grant Permanent Fund for early childhood education, and I'm proud that New Mexico is now the first state in the nation to constitutionally guarantee our youngest children the right to early childhood education. With responsible public land management, we can ensure that all our public institutions are receiving the funds necessary to ensure our children a successful future."

Representative McQueen serves as Chair of the House Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Committee, a member of the House Judiciary Committee, Vice Chair of the interim Water & Natural Resources Committee, and a member of the interim Land Grant Committee. He has been a leader in the state legislature on issues that are critical to New Mexicans, such as increasing royalty rates to ensure oil and gas companies pay their fair share to New Mexico taxpayers. These increased royalty rates fund our public education system, while guaranteeing that our royalty rates are competitive with neighboring states like Texas.

McQueen led efforts in 2025 to reform the NM Department of Game and Fish into the NM Department of Wildlife, providing the tools needed for a modern wildlife management system. McQueen sponsored legislation that amended the Produced Water Act to restore the ability of the state agency Oil Conservation Division to assess fines to oil and gas bad actors. He helped lead the efforts to strengthen NM's Strategic Water Reserve by creating a non-reverting fund to support work related to the strategic water reserve, adding aquifer recharge, and allowing the Interstate Stream Commission to prioritize transactions that benefit recreation or cultural uses in addition to the primary purposes of the Strategic Water Reserve Act.

McQueen championed Roxy's Law – The Wildlife Conservation & Public Safety Act – in 2021 to ban traps, snares, and poisons on public lands. McQueen has long been a supporter of New Mexico's land grants, creating a dedicated fund to ensure long-term sustainability for these historic communities.

McQueen has also been a leader in the legislature on ethics and transparency measures, including receiving the *Foundation for Open Government's Dixon Award* in 2021 for increasing legislative transparency. He led efforts on the Capital Outlay Allocation Transparency Bill which requires publication of capital outlay allocations by legislators and the governor to improve public transparency in infrastructure spending. In the 2025 session, his legislation to change the

constitution to require the Governor to explain pocket vetoes passed and will be headed to voters in 2026 for a public vote. McQueen supported legislation that created an independent Ethics Commission to investigate allegations of misconduct and corruption, holding all elected officials accountable to the public. He sponsored the Public Corruption Act and the Elected Official Pension Forfeiture Act to hold bad actors accountable. He has sponsored legislation to expand public financing to include candidates for Secretary of State, because he believes that the state's top campaign finance enforcement official should not be raising money from the same system they are regulating.

In addition to serving in the NM Legislature, McQueen operates his own law practice in land conservation, real property transactions, housing development, and business. Prior to opening his own law practice, he also served as Director of Conservation Programs for the Santa Fe Conservation Trust; Director of Land Conservation & General Counsel for the Taos Land Trust; and Attorney for the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer. McQueen began his law career as a judicial law clerk for the New Mexico Court of Appeals. He has previously served as a board member for the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce; Board Member of the Galisteo Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association; Board Member of the Galisteo Community Association; Member of the Galisteo Community Planning Committee; an Advisor for the Small Agricultural Land Conservation Initiative; a Board Member and President of the Santa Fe Watershed Association; a member and chair of the Santa Fe County Open Land, Trails & Parks Advisory Committee; a member of the Santa Fe River Commission; and a member of the Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Council.

"We're in a crisis of democracy," said McQueen. "We're vulnerable in New Mexico. The legislature has done a good job of preparing for these unprecedented times, but we need strong leaders here at home at all levels of government to protect hard-working New Mexicans. That's why I'm running for the important office of State Land Commissioner."

Representative McQueen serves NM House District 50, which encompasses areas of Santa Fe and Sandoval Counties (prior to redistricting, it also served portions of Torrance, Valencia, and Bernalillo Counties), and he was first elected to the New Mexico House of Representatives in the 2014 election. He assumed office on January 20, 2015, and has served 6 terms over 11 years. He earned a BA from Williams College, his law degree from the University of Michigan Law School, his MBA from the University of New Mexico, and a Master of Science from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources & Environment. Originally from California, he has lived in New Mexico for 30 years, and he and his wife are raising their two children in Galisteo, New Mexico. They are proud that their children benefit from New Mexico's public schools system.

The office of New Mexico State Land Commissioner will be on the 2026 election ballot, with the Primary Election scheduled for June 2, 2026, and the General Election slated for November 3, 2026. Current Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard is term-limited after having served two terms in the office. You can read more about McQueen at [www.McQueenForNM.com](http://www.McQueenForNM.com).

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