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Prescribed Burning Act an EMNRD priority for 2021 session

Santa Fe, NM – The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) announces that the just introduced Prescribed Burning Act, sponsored by Representative Matthew McQueen, will be an agency priority for the upcoming legislative session. The bill focuses on managing our forests for a changing climate and aims to prevent future catastrophic fires.

“The ability to conduct prescribed burns on private land can help prevent future wildfires from becoming more intense, especially in the face of warmer and drier conditions due to climate change,” said EMNRD Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “The Prescribed Burning Act will help the state to better manage our forests.”

“This summer’s lengthy and intense fire season underscored the need to act now,” said Representative Matthew McQueen. “By expanding the ability to conducted prescribed burns, the state will be able to take proactive measures to have a healthier and more resilient forest.”

Prescribed burns are an important tool in forest management, especially as the climate changes and fire season becomes longer and more intense. This summer, we saw first-hand the effectiveness of prescribed burns as a management tool with the Medio Fire. A prescribed burn in the area from a year before kept the fire from expanding into the ski basin and established a barrier that allowed our firefighters to better control and fight the fire.

The Prescribed Burning Act would clarify liability for private landowners who conduct prescribed burns making insurance more available and affordable. This has resulted in increased prescribed burning in other states that have enacted similar legislation.

An overview of the legislation, including frequently asked questions, can be found [here](#).

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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

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