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Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
Todd E. Leahy, JD, PhD, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Lujan Grisham administration averts layoffs, saves jobs in Grants area

SANTA FE, NM – The Forestry Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) is proud to announce that potential layoffs at Mt. Taylor Manufacturing have been averted. The Forestry Division signed an agreement with the first of several local landowners that will enable a forest restoration project to begin on private ranches in the Zuni Mountains. This project was designed for ecological restoration and will reduce the likelihood of damage from severe wildfire. The wood by-products will be sent to Mt. Taylor Manufacturing, providing a wood source during a critical time while National Forests are still under timber harvest restrictions.

Mt. Taylor Manufacturing is a family-owned business employing about 40 New Mexicans, about 90 percent are from the Navajo Nation. The company partners on the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program in the Zuni Mountains, however, the recent federal injunction restricting forest management left the company without a wood supply and layoffs were imminent. Thanks to fast-thinking and funding from the newly established Forest and Watershed Restoration Act that was signed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in March 2019, a new wood source has been secured and a key company in rural New Mexico will continue to operate.

“I am relieved and gratified that we were able to move quickly to identify a solution,” Gov. Lujan Grisham said. “I have tasked my state agencies with being as proactive as possible and with expeditiously solving problems on the back-end when necessary. Jobs in every community in New Mexico – whether rural or urban, in whatever industry – are the cornerstone of our economic diversification efforts, our push to create an economy that works for everyone in this state.”

“This project proves that we can support New Mexico workers through collaboration and sound climate and environmental policies,” said EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “I’m proud of

EMNRD's part in addressing issues quickly and innovatively throughout New Mexico."

"This is just one example of the great things that can be accomplished when people work together," said State Forester Laura McCarthy. "This public-private partnership is beneficial to our forests and will keep a long-standing business in Grants operational. Thank you to everyone who moved quickly to solve this issue to keep jobs in New Mexico."

The projects that will begin this week are a benefit to all New Mexicans as they are necessary to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire and restore fire-adapted forest ecosystems that provide wildlife habitat and improve watershed health. The Forestry Division continues to look for ways to help local businesses, private landowners, and communities throughout New Mexico on restoration projects.

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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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