



2018 NEW MEXICO CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

Outdoor recreation including hunting and fishing is a multi-billion-dollar industry in New Mexico and the United States, supporting jobs and economic development in rural communities. But for many sportsmen and women, hunting and fishing are more than a pastime – they are a passion. Hunters and anglers care deeply about wildlife, habitat and the public lands they have used for generations. They also have a long track record of civic engagement.

For all of those reasons, the New Mexico Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, with the concurrence of the New Mexico organizations listed below, developed a short general public interest questionnaire for every candidate listed on the 2018 general election ballot for Commissioner of Public Lands. Our goal was to develop questions that affect all New Mexicans, but which are not often considered during the course of a typical political campaign.

The race for Commissioner of Public Lands, who manages some 9 million acres of land and 13 million acres of subsurface rights, is between three individuals: Republican candidate Patrick Lyons, Democratic candidate Stephanie Garcia Richard and Libertarian candidate Michael Lucero.

We had asked the candidates during the primary elections to answer a short questionnaire. You can see the candidates' answers by visiting the NM BHA website (www.backcountryhunters.org/new_mexico_bha) and clicking on the "Issues" tab.

For the general election, we submitted a new set of questions to each campaign on Aug. 27, followed up in equal measure to ensure each campaign had received the questionnaire, and gave them more than a month to respond. We followed up again in equal measure with reminders and gave them extra time if requested.

We received responses from two of the three campaigns – Republican candidate and former Land Commissioner Patrick Lyons and Democratic candidate Stephanie Garcia Richard. Libertarian candidate Michael Lucero did not respond.

The candidates' answers are on the following pages, along with a short, campaign-provided biography of the candidate and a photograph. We specifically asked the candidates to keep their answers short. We hope that New Mexico voters of all political backgrounds will find the responses informative.

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers and the following groups are nonprofit charitable 501(c)(3) organizations. We do not endorse or oppose any candidate or party for any political office. We do urge all eligible New Mexico residents to vote.

Jarrett Babincsak, Chairman
New Mexico Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

On behalf of:

- New Mexico Wildlife Federation
- Albuquerque Wildlife Federation
- United Bowhunters of New Mexico
- Wild Turkey Sportsmen's Association
- Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen
- Doña Ana County Associated Sportsmen
- Sportsmen Concerned
- New Mexico Sportsmen





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STEPHANIE GARCIA RICHARD DEMOCRAT

Stephanie Garcia Richard is a three-term Representative and Chair of the House Education Committee. A native New Mexican and lifelong educator, Stephanie learned at a young age the importance of serving others. Her father served in WWII and worked as a schoolteacher. Stephanie followed in her father's footsteps after earning her degree at Columbia University. Stephanie used her experience as an educator to shape policy and now wants to transform the State Land Office into a real advocate for public education, renewable energy, and clean water. Common Cause has awarded Stephanie for her work to increase ethics and transparency in our state government and numerous educational organizations named her a champion for working to pass legislation like early childhood education expansion and restricting the use of restraints on students with autism. Stephanie is endorsed by Commissioner Ray Powell, the New Mexico Building Trades, Dave Simon, and more.

Bio provided by candidate

1. AT STATEHOOD, NEW MEXICO RECEIVED SOME 13 MILLION ACRES FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. WE STILL RETAIN SUBSURFACE RIGHTS TO THE ORIGINAL 13 MILLION ACRES, BUT ABOUT 4 MILLION ACRES OF SURFACE RIGHTS HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP. AS COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS, WHAT WILL BE YOUR POLICY ON THE FUTURE TRANSFER OR SALE OF STATE TRUST LANDS TO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP?

This office has been plagued by backroom deals that only benefit a select few. My opponent alone cost our state over \$40 million in lost revenue by handing out sweetheart deals to his donors while he served as land commissioner. Our state trust lands exist to benefit the state and the 21 beneficiaries, our schools and hospitals, not politicians' pet projects. Selling of any land would need to be in the best interest not only in terms of short-term financial gains but long-term as well. We should be increasing access to state trust lands, not selling them off piece by piece.

2. EXPLAIN WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, YOU WOULD MAKE IN THE WAY THE STATE LAND OFFICE CONDUCTS LAND EXCHANGES OF STATE TRUST LAND WITH PRIVATE PARTIES.

Restoring transparency and ethics in the state land office will be critical if we want to transform the land office and how it conducts any business. On day one, any and all land exchanges, leases, and negotiations will be done publically and will be easily accessible online. I will reinstitute the practice of setting up "memoranda of understanding" between the state land office and any city, county, state, or tribal entity that deals with state trust land. All stakeholders will be invited to participate in public hearings to ensure we end an era of corruption and backroom deals.

3. THERE ARE CALLS BY SOME TO TURN OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OVER MILLIONS OF ACRES OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO THE INDIVIDUAL STATES. DO YOU AGREE? IF MANAGEMENT OR OWNERSHIP WAS CONVEYED TO THE STATES, DO YOU BELIEVE THOSE PUBLIC LANDS SHOULD BE MANAGED BY THE STATE LAND OFFICE OR PUT INTO A SEPARATE ENTITY FOR MANAGEMENT?

No. The state land office is already spread extremely thin to manage the millions of acres already in its care.

4. THE STATE LAND OFFICE RECENTLY RAISED THE ANNUAL LEASE FEE PAID BY THE STATE GAME COMMISSION FOR ACCESS TO STATE TRUST LANDS FROM \$200,000 PER YEAR TO \$1 MILLION, AND INDICATED THE LEASE IS STILL TOO LOW. SHOULD THE \$1 MILLION FEE BE RAISED, LOWERED, OR DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS ABOUT RIGHT? PLEASE ELABORATE.

At this moment I am not considering raising the fees. Our outdoorsmen and women already pump millions into our economy each year. I am interested in working with Game and Fish to leverage the lease fee for additional federal dollars available for restoration and remediation of public lands.

5. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE LEVEL OF SERVICE THE STATE LAND OFFICE PROVIDES TO HUNTERS AND ANGLERS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE ANNUAL LEASE FEE? WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE LEASE CONTRACT?

Yes. No changes at this time.

6. DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE EXPANDING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY, INCLUDING CAMPING, ON STATE TRUST LANDS? WHY OR WHY NOT?

Yes. I believe the office can do more in allowing easier access to state trust land that is ideal for outdoor activities.

7. THE VAST MAJORITY OF REVENUE GENERATED BY THE STATE LAND OFFICE COMES FROM OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE VARIOUS TYPES OF LEASES, FEES AND OTHER PAYMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE'S OIL AND GAS RESOURCES, OR SHOULD THE NEXT LAND COMMISSIONER INCREASE ANY OR ALL OF THOSE PAYMENTS AND TRY TO GET MORE REVENUE FOR ITS STATED GOAL – EDUCATION? PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT, IF ANY, REVENUE SOURCES COULD BE INCREASED TO SUPPORT EDUCATION IN NEW MEXICO.

I believe we can and must do more to make sure everyone is paying their fair share and that includes raising royalty rates and ensuring methane capture. When it comes to future leases, I will ensure greater transparency, increases to environmental protections, and stopping the practice of companies skirting by paying zero percent in royalty to our state. Lastly, I will advocate for renewable build-outs on state trust land and utilizing a percentage of the interest earned off of the fund to pay for statewide access to an early childhood education.

8. SHOULD THE STATE LAND OFFICE ESTABLISH STRONGER PRIORITIES IN PROMOTING RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES IN NEW MEXICO? PLEASE ELABORATE.

Yes. The current land commissioner abandoned nearly \$750 million in renewable energy projects that must be reestablished and brought to fruition. We must work on building the infrastructure necessary to make New Mexico the national leader in renewable energy production and transmission. We build a royalty structure off solar and wind much like we do oil and gas. This transition would prepare our state financially and in terms of good paying jobs for when the oil and gas bust happens over the next few decades.





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PATRICK LYONS REPUBLICAN

Patrick H. Lyons is a third generation New Mexican and owner of Lyons Angus Ranch. In addition to serving as a New Mexico Public Regulation Commissioner, he is an active managing rancher and farmer with a continuous cow/calf operation, buying and selling beef cattle, and growing wheat and hay.

Commissioner Lyons has been married to his wife Sandy, an educator, for 33 years and has three adult children. He has served as a Public Regulation Commissioner for District 2 at the PRC since 2011 and Commissioner of Public Lands from 2003-2010. During his tenure, he was able to generate a record \$4 billion in revenue which was distributed to the beneficiaries, while maintaining an annual flat budget for eight years. He also served as a New Mexico State Senator, representing the northeast region, from 1996 to 2002.

Commissioner Lyons holds a Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics from Colorado State University and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Economics from New Mexico State University.

Bio provided by candidate

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When I was Commissioner of Public Lands, I left with 78,000 more acres of State Trust Land than when I got there. I will not decrease the number of acres of State Trust Land. However, if schools need land in the urban areas I will trade land to the district, as I did with Cleveland High School in Rio Rancho, Gallup Middle School, and the School for the Visually Impaired in Albuquerque. Also, Eagle Nest Lake would be privately owned if I did not get a bill passed to purchase the lake for the people of New Mexico to enjoy.

2. EXPLAIN WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, YOU WOULD MAKE IN THE WAY THE STATE LAND OFFICE CONDUCTS LAND EXCHANGES OF STATE TRUST LAND WITH PRIVATE PARTIES.

The State Land Office currently advertises locally and statewide by newspaper. I believe there are additional ways to get the word out, such as online advertisements and on the State Land Office website. The goal is to be as transparent as possible.

3. THERE ARE CALLS BY SOME TO TURN OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OVER MILLIONS OF ACRES OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO THE INDIVIDUAL STATES. DO YOU AGREE? IF MANAGEMENT OR OWNERSHIP WAS CONVEYED TO THE STATES, DO YOU BELIEVE THOSE PUBLIC LANDS SHOULD BE MANAGED BY THE STATE LAND OFFICE OR PUT INTO A SEPARATE ENTITY FOR MANAGEMENT?

No, but if that is going to happen we should do a pilot project of about 500,000 acres and let the State Land Office manage it to see if it works after a test period of five years.

4. THE STATE LAND OFFICE RECENTLY RAISED THE ANNUAL LEASE FEE PAID BY THE STATE GAME COMMISSION FOR ACCESS TO STATE TRUST LANDS FROM \$200,000 PER YEAR TO \$1 MILLION, AND INDICATED THE LEASE IS STILL TOO LOW. SHOULD THE \$1 MILLION FEE BE RAISED, LOWERED, OR DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS ABOUT RIGHT? PLEASE ELABORATE.

One million is too high, we should lower it to a responsible level so license fees don't increase or the Game Commission says its too high and walks away.

5. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE LEVEL OF SERVICE THE STATE LAND OFFICE PROVIDES TO HUNTERS AND ANGLERS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE ANNUAL LEASE FEE? WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE LEASE CONTRACT?

More access and designated camping sites.

6. DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE EXPANDING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY, INCLUDING CAMPING, ON STATE TRUST LANDS? WHY OR WHY NOT?

Yes, I support expanding recreational opportunity. Designated camping sites should be the only access areas due to fire danger, land management, and wildlife impact. People should not camp in non-designated areas during wildlife calving season or in areas that will disrupt wildlife. Also, land lessees must maintain the land, which places an undue burden on them and subjects them to liability.

7. THE VAST MAJORITY OF REVENUE GENERATED BY THE STATE LAND OFFICE COMES FROM OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE VARIOUS TYPES OF LEASES, FEES AND OTHER PAYMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE'S OIL AND GAS RESOURCES, OR SHOULD THE NEXT LAND COMMISSIONER INCREASE ANY OR ALL OF THOSE PAYMENTS AND TRY TO GET MORE REVENUE FOR ITS STATED GOAL – EDUCATION? PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT, IF ANY, REVENUE SOURCES COULD BE INCREASED TO SUPPORT EDUCATION IN NEW MEXICO.

I always strive to improve. Yes, I will continue to make sure that raising revenue for education and the beneficiaries is a priority. I would have to determine what the current Land Commissioner has done and see where we can improve. I would work with my assistant commissioners and staff to determine the best course of action.

8. SHOULD THE STATE LAND OFFICE ESTABLISH STRONGER PRIORITIES IN PROMOTING RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES IN NEW MEXICO? PLEASE ELABORATE.

Yes. As Land Commissioner, I did the first wind generation lease on State Trust Land and have been involved in nearly all renewable projects in the state.

