1	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
2	Egg Inspection Fees Rule Rulemaking Hearing
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5	Moderated by Les Owen, Deputy Director
6	Thursday, July 31, 2025
7	8:59 a.m.
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10	Central New Mexico Community College Workforce
11	Training Center
12	5600 Eagle Rock Avenue Northeast
13	Albuquerque, NM 87113
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19	Reported by: James Cogswell
20	JOB NO: 7452800
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1	APPEARANCES
2	List of Attendees:
3	Les Owen, Deputy Director, New Mexico Department of
4	Agriculture
5	Uriel Fuentes, Assistant Division Director, New Mexico
6	Department of Agriculture
7	Katie Laney, Assistant Division Director, New Mexico
8	Department of Agriculture
9	Steve Baca, Assistant Division Director, New Mexico
10	Department of Agriculture
11	Bradley Lewis, New Mexico Department of Agriculture
12	Candie Sweetser, New Mexico Department of Agriculture
13	Vanessa Fisher, New Mexico Department of Agriculture
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#### 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 MR. OWEN: Good morning. At this time, 3 we will start the hearing that addresses the proposed repeal and replacement of the Egg Inspection Fees 4 5 rule, Title 21, Chapter 34, Part 7 of the New Mexico 6 Administrative Code. 7 My name is Les Owen, and I am deputy 8 director with the New Mexico Department of 9 Agriculture. Today I will be officiating this 10 hearing. Please make sure that you have signed in for 11 the record and that your cell phone is off or 12 silenced. Thank you. 13 Copies of the proposed amendments to the Egg Inspection Fees rule were made available in 14 15 strikethrough version and in cleanup copy form as you 16 walked in. If you require copies, please hold your 17 hand up and they will be provided to you. 18 For -- the day and date is Thursday, July 31, 2025, and the time is 9 a.m. 19 This hearing is 20 being held in person at the Central New Mexico 2.1 Community College Workforce Training Center, 22 Albuquerque, New Mexico, 5600 Eagle Rock Avenue 23 Northeast. This is the published date, time, and location for this hearing. 2.4 25 A transcript of today's hearing will be

1	available from the department's webpage. Following a
2	summary of the proposed primary amendments, the public
3	will have an opportunity to provide testimony
4	regarding the proposed amendments.
5	Mr. Fuentes will now provide a summary
6	of the public notices, proposed primary amendments to
7	the Egg Inspection Fees rule, and any related
8	information.
9	MR. FUENTES: Good morning. I am Uri
10	Fuentes, an assistant division director with the New
11	Mexico Department of Agriculture. The Egg Inspection
12	Fees rule was promulgated under the authority of the
13	Egg Grading Act, which established egg standards, egg
14	dealers' licenses, egg inspection fees, and assures
15	that the eggs sold in the state are fit for human
16	consumption and labeled properly.
17	Public notices for the hearing were
18	published as follows and in accordance with state
19	laws: June 24, 2025, in the New Mexico Register;
20	June 24, 2025, in the Albuquerque Journal; June 24,
21	2025, in the Santa Fe New Mexican in Spanish and
22	English; June 25, 2025, in the Las Cruces Sun News.
23	Hearing notices were also posted on the
24	New Mexico Sunshine Portal, at New Mexico Department
25	of Agriculture District Office in Albuquerque, and on

1	the New Mexico Department of Agriculture's website in			
2	Spanish and English.			
3	Copies of the proposed rule were made			
4	available at the New Mexico Department of Agriculture			
5	Las Cruces main office and lab building, New Mexico			
6	Department of Agriculture Veterinary Diagnostic			
7	Services Lab in Albuquerque, New Mexico Department of			
8	Agriculture Peanut Grading Station in Portales, and on			
9	the department's website.			
LO	Notification and the proposed rule were			
L1	sent to the New Mexico Economic Development			
L2	Development Small Business Regulatory Advisory			
L3	Commission and to the Legislative Council Service. As			
L4	of today, New Mexico Department of Agriculture has not			
L5	received findings from either. Notice of public			
L6	hearings were also emailed to current egg dealers.			
L7	Although the amendment amendments			
L8	are few, the age of the Egg Inspection Fees rules			
L9	required a repeal and replacement process to address			
20	updates to style and format in conjunction with the			
21	New Mexico Department of Agriculture's proposed			
22	amendments.			
23	Primary proposed amendments to the Egg			
24	Inspection Fees rule include proposed fees changed			
25	from 12 cents per case for 30 dozen to 15 cents per			

1	case, 30 dozen. The last fee adjustment to the Egg
2	Inspection Fees rule was 1985. An adjustment to the
3	fees is necessary to help offset the increased cost of
4	services, licensing, and the inspections due to
5	inflation and mandatory adjustments to staff salaries.
6	The amendment updates the updated
7	outdated fee that supports egg inspections, licensing
8	activities, and promoting the poultry industry in
9	accordance with the Egg Grading Act 25.6.1 through
10	25.6.16. The fees collected support portions of 11
11	inspection staff and two office staff salaries. The
12	staff complete inspections three to four times a year
13	at retail locations that sell eggs in New Mexico. In
14	the past three years, staff have completed 826
15	inspections, and 107 or 12.95 percent resulted in stop
16	sales on eggs.
17	In the past five years, the egg
18	inspection fees have maintained the program's
19	activities have haven't maintained the program's
20	activities. The program is on average \$40,601 short
21	annually. Based on the estimate from the past five
22	years' revenue of egg sales, the increase to 15 cents
23	per case would generate \$37,000.
24	Other states have similar inspection
25	fees, but comparisons are challenging since they

1	charge other fees and have some significantly more
2	egg dealers and producers. For example, Louisiana's
3	fees fee is 16 cents per case for shell eggs with
4	an additional fee for egg products. Indiana's fees
5	are 11 cents per case, but revenue is generated by
6	their approximate 290 producers.
7	New Mexico has 66 dealers with only 4
8	in-state dealers and no commercial egg producers. To
9	fulfill the statutory obligations, fees must be
LO	increased to support inspectors' salaries, for
L1	inspections, and department costs.
L2	MR. OWEN: Thank you, Mr. Fuentes.
L3	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
L4	has not received any written comments prior to this
L5	hearing.
L6	We will now open the floor for
L7	comments. Please begin by stating your name and
L8	affiliation for the record. Your comments and
L9	questions should be limited to the contents of the
20	rule. Please raise your hand and I will call up on
21	you to come up to the table to provide comments. I
22	will now begin accepting comments.
23	Is there anyone else wishing to
24	comment? Seeing none, we will close the public oral
25	comment period for this hearing. Written comments

1	will be accepted until 5 p.m. Thursday, July 31, 2025.
2	All public comments will be presented to the
3	secretary/director of the New Mexico Department of
4	Agriculture, Mr. Jeff Witte, and will be submitted for
5	consideration to the New Mexico State University Board
6	of Regents.
7	Submitted comments and either a
8	transcript of today's hearing and/or recording will be
9	available from the New Mexico Department of
10	Agriculture's webpage.
11	Thank you all for participating. We
12	will close this hearing at 9:06 a.m.
13	(Whereupon, at 9:06 a.m., the
14	proceeding was concluded.)
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#### 1 CERTIFICATE 2 I, JAMES COGSWELL, the officer before whom 3 the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby certify that any witness(es) in the foregoing 4 5 proceedings, prior to testifying, were duly sworn; 6 that the proceedings were recorded by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified 8 transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of 9 said proceedings are a true and accurate record to the best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am 10 11 neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any 12 of the parties to the action in which this was taken; 13 and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties 14 15 hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the 16 outcome of this action. 17 August 14, 2025 JAMES COGSWELL 18 Notary Public in and for the 19 20 State of New Mexico 2.1 22 23 2.4 25

#### 1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER 2 I, RACHEL HUFF, do hereby certify that this 3 transcript was prepared from the digital audio recording of the foregoing proceeding, that said 4 5 transcript is a true and accurate record of the 6 proceedings to the best of my knowledge, skills, and 7 ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in 8 9 which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a 10 relative or employee of any counsel or attorney 11 employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or 12 otherwise interested in the outcome of this action. 13 August 14, 2025 14 15 RACHEL HUFF 16 17 18 19 20 2.1 22 23 2.4 2.5

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