

Jos Lesscher  
Chair



Jess Lewis  
Vice Chair

## NEW MEXICO STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMISSION

### **Subject: Opportunity to Form Voluntary Regional Planning Districts**

Dear Local Emergency Planning Committee Members,

We hope this message finds you well and in good spirits. The New Mexico State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) is dedicated to supporting your efforts in emergency planning and community right-to-know activities. As part of our ongoing commitment, we are pleased to announce an exciting opportunity for existing planning districts to form voluntary regional planning districts.

#### **Purpose**

The intent behind this initiative is to enable jurisdictions to pool their personnel and resources, making it easier to establish and sustain Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) and fulfill the requirements of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA). By collaborating, districts can leverage shared expertise, improve resource allocation, and enhance overall emergency preparedness.

#### **Legal Framework**

Under EPCRA Section 301(a), the SERC is empowered to designate emergency planning districts that facilitate effective emergency planning and response. This section provides the legal foundation for the establishment of regional planning districts, allowing for greater flexibility and resource sharing among jurisdictions.

#### **Benefits of Regional Planning Districts**

1. **Resource Sharing:** Combining resources from multiple jurisdictions can provide better access to equipment, expertise, and personnel, enhancing the overall capability to respond to emergencies.
2. **Efficiency:** Regional planning districts can streamline the process of meeting EPCRA requirements by reducing duplication of efforts and creating a more cohesive planning strategy.
3. **Enhanced Collaboration:** Working together fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, leading to stronger relationships and improved coordination during emergencies.
4. **Improved Training and Preparedness:** Joint training exercises and planning activities can be more comprehensive and effective, benefiting from the diverse perspectives and experiences of multiple jurisdictions.

## How to Form a Regional Planning District

We encourage interested planning districts to begin discussions with neighboring jurisdictions about forming voluntary regional planning districts. The process involves the following steps:

1. **Initial Consultation:** Reach out to potential partner jurisdictions to discuss the benefits and feasibility of forming a regional planning district.
2. **Draft Agreement:** Collaboratively draft an agreement outlining the structure, roles, responsibilities, and resource commitments of each participating jurisdiction.
3. **Submit Proposal:** Submit the proposed regional planning district agreement to the SERC for review and approval.
4. **Establish LEPC:** Once approved, work together to establish a regional LEPC, ensuring representation from all required groups as specified under EPCRA Section 301(c).

## SERC Support

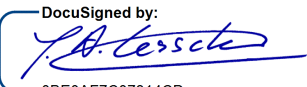
The SERC is committed to supporting this initiative and will provide guidance and assistance throughout the process. We will offer resources, templates, and best practices to help districts successfully transition to a regional planning model.

## Conclusion

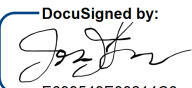
We believe that the formation of regional planning districts represents a significant opportunity to enhance emergency preparedness and community resilience across New Mexico. We look forward to seeing the positive impacts of this initiative and are here to support you every step of the way.

If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Thank you for your continued dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities.

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Jos A. Lesscher  
Chair of the New Mexico SERC

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Jess Lewis  
Vice Chair of the New Mexico SERC

6/25/2024  
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