**Purpose:** An appropriation to the economic development department to fund a working group to identify ways to direct investment and reinvestment in frontier communities.

**Critical need to invest in New Mexico’s most remote communities now!**

Frontier communities are the remote and geographically isolated settlements and villages that over centuries evolved into the Land of Enchantment.

- New Mexico has 341 census designated places (CDPs), defined as a concentration of population, identifiable by name, but not within an incorporated place. Of New Mexico’s 108 incorporated places, 33 have populations under 1000.
- “…Geography of poverty calls for more crosscutting and responsive approaches that work at a more effective scale to address poverty in the context of place.” – Elizabeth Kneebone Testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Human Resources, 02/15/2017
- Across New Mexico the smallest communities struggle to respond to growing and more complicated needs.
- Without an economically healthy community, families are often forced to migrate to urban centers for jobs, education and other opportunities. Often this leaves elders without a support system and working families isolated from their home community and extended family. Two-thirds of New Mexico’s population lives in four Metropolitan Statistical Areas with 100,000 or more inhabitants.
- Many small communities have zero economic activity or plans for economic development.

**Frontier communities face unique economic and social challenges.** They typically have higher unemployment, a higher proportion of older and disabled residents, lower educational attainment, and less access to health care, childcare, healthy food, adequate housing, broadband and reliable transportation.

**SOLUTION**

- Identify innovative ways to direct investment and reinvestment of state and federal resources into frontier communities for the development of infrastructure, jobs, community and essential services.
- Review existing law to determine if it facilitates equitable investment in frontier communities and, if needed, develop recommendations for legislative action.

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