



TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Demis Foster, Executive Director, Conservation Voters New Mexico
DATE: Friday, Nov. 2, 2018
RE: UPDATE – FINAL COUNTDOWN TO 2018 NM GENERAL ELECTION
CONTACT: Liliana Castillo | 575-219-9619 | Liliana@CVNM.org

In the 2018 election cycle thus far, Conservation Voters New Mexico (CVNM) invested **over \$2 million** to elect Michelle Lujan Grisham Governor, Stephanie Garcia Richard Land Commissioner, Steve Fischmann Public Regulation Commissioner and a slate of House of Representative candidates who are dedicated to conservation values and committed to defending clean air, clean water and wild and cultural lands. **This spending represents CVNM's largest electoral investment ever.** CVNM has a long history of smart investments in voter outreach across the state.

With clean energy costs competitive with fossil fuels right now, the barriers to a clean energy future are no longer technical or economic — they're political. That's why CVNM has invested heavily in elections up and down the ballot in 2018. We take this work seriously because these candidates – running for Governor, Commissioner of Public Lands, Secretary of State, Public Regulation Commission and seats in the NM House of Representatives – make critical decisions that impact New Mexicans every single day. Do our children breathe clean air? Do our families have clean water? Do our local and state economies support good paying jobs that can feed a family? Do our state budget and revenue-generators reflect our shared values for protecting our air, land and water? Each of the races for offices we have engaged in have an impact on these most critical questions.

The 2018 elections present a unique opportunity to elect a pro-conservation Governor, Commissioner of Public Lands, and pro-conservation majorities at the Public Regulation Commission and New Mexico House of Representatives. In the absence of federal leadership on environmental issues, it is critical that New Mexico has strong state-level environmental leadership. 56% of New Mexicans disapprove of the way the Trump administration is handling issues related to land, water and wildlife¹.

Below you can find an overview of Conservation Voters New Mexico's 2018 electoral work, which we engaged in via our independent expenditure political action committee, CVNM Verde Voters Fund, and coordinated political action committee, CVNM Action Fund.

Over \$2 Million Invested

¹ Colorado College. "Conservation in the West: 2018 New Mexico Fact Sheet." *State of the Rockies*. https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/2018/reports/ConservationintheWest_2018_StateFactSheet_NewMexico.pdf

CVNM's over \$2 million in electoral spending in the 2018 cycle via our independent expenditure political action committee CVNM Verde Voters Fund and coordinated political action committee CVNM Action Fund went toward direct mail, radio, cable and network television ad buys, digital persuasion and mobilization - targeting an estimated audience of at least 823,000 potential voters - and investment in individual campaigns. We engaged in 3 statewide races, one Public Regulation Commission race and 26 House of Representative races.

Environmental Messaging Sets Candidates at the Top of the Ticket Apart

Clean energy, protection of air, water and land, and holding industries accountable were defining issues in the races for Governor, Commissioner of Public Lands and Public Regulation Commission.

Governor

Michelle Lujan Grisham earned CVNM's endorsement for Governor early on because of her commitment to [embracing clean energy](#) like wind and solar, her commitment to holding oil and gas accountable for pollution such as [methane waste](#), and her detailed understanding of the challenges facing our state and [her plans](#) to address them.

The Lujan Grisham campaign [ran an ad](#) focused on diversifying New Mexico's economy by leveraging our state's abundant solar and wind resources. CVNM Verde Voters Fund ran multiple digital and TV ads in the Governor's race, highlighting the stark contrast between the two candidates on [health](#), [pollution](#) and [public lands issues](#).

In contrast, Rep. Steve Pearce is a member of the extreme Freedom Caucus in Congress and has earned an abysmal [4%](#) on our national partner League of Conservation Voters' annual *Scorecard*. In addition, Pearce was selected for the [2018 Dirty Dozen in the States](#). Modeled after LCV Victory Fund's federal "Dirty Dozen," the state version highlights 12 of the most anti-environment state-level candidates from around the country who state LCVs are working to defeat for the 2018 election cycle.

It is significant that the [Las Cruces Sun-News](#), the largest newspaper in Pearce's Congressional district, endorsed Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham for Governor, noting:

"Lujan Grisham has offered a comprehensive plan for how she intends to govern, that is impressive in both its detail and scope. Instead of simply laying out aspirational goals, the plan explains the specific steps to be taken to achieve those goals. It focuses mostly on jobs and the economy, which must be the top priority for whoever the next governor will be."

Rep. Lujan Grisham's values for environmental protection, social justice and transparency are vital to restoring confidence in the Governor's office after eight years of Governor Susana Martinez' destructive tenure. Martinez' led her administration down a drastic anti-environment path on day one, where backroom deals and political plays decided how our state is run and Steve Pearce will bring more of the same.

Commissioner of Public Lands

Similar themes emerged in the Commissioner of Public Lands race. Rep. Stephanie Garcia Richard is committed to taking [a holistic approach](#) to managing the nine million acres of state trust lands and 13 million acres of subsurface that the State Land Office oversees. Historically, New Mexico's state trust lands have operated like a gas-powered ATM. These publicly held lands are intended to generate revenue for critical public services like schools and hospitals, but a myopic focus on oil and gas development has both limited the revenue we can generate while also failing to protect these lands for future generations. For the first time ever, we have the opportunity to elect a Land Commissioner who will ensure that our state trust lands reflect our cultural values around land management. Rep. Garcia Richard is committed to bringing transparency and public input back into this highly powerful office.

Stephanie Garcia Richard ran [an ad](#) in which she committed to invest in clean energy like wind and solar and hold the oil and gas industry accountable for pollution on state trust lands.

Pat Lyons' former tenure as Land Commissioner was marked by scandals, an absence of transparency and [land swaps with campaign donors](#) – a move that Lyons fought for all the way to the New Mexico Supreme Court before it was overturned. CVNM Verde Voters Fund ran a statewide [TV](#) ad revealing the controversial land exchange where he attempted to privatize pristine recreational and cultural lands in exchange for barren parcels along a highway.

There is no evidence that a second Lyons term in the State Land Office would be any different than his first. The oil and gas industry clearly sees Lyons as an ally who will put their interests above all other. In September, Chevron contributed \$2 million in support of Lyons to a conservative political action committee NM Strong, highlighted in a [series of ads](#) and [websites](#) shining a light on this issue for voters. The Land Commissioner operates as the landlord to oil and gas lessees on state trust lands and it is highly problematic that a corporation – that by definition is focused solely on its bottom line - would funnel so much money in to a race for elected public office.

Public Regulation Commission

Former State Senator Steve Fischmann won the primary election, despite [last minute attempts by PNM](#) to support the incumbent Sandy Jones. Similar to Chevron's support of Lyons, PNM made it clear that Jones was their choice regulator – problematic for a body such as the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) that is tasked with protecting ratepayers and the public. If Fischmann's campaign is successful, he will join Commissioners Valerie Espinoza and Cynthia Hall to form a pro-climate majority on the PRC. Because the PRC regulates electric utilities, it is also the body that can and should take climate change into consideration in these decisions. New Mexico is already on the frontlines of climate impacts. The PRC can ensure that we transition away from fuel sources that contribute to these impacts. Getting Steve Fischmann across the line will help ensure that utilities are being more responsive to their ratepayers than to their shareholders.

What's at Stake in the House of Representatives

CVNM Action Fund [endorsed in 26 House races](#) as part of our effort to turn the Democratic majority into a pro-conservation majority. Our efforts in House districts across the state are focused on protecting conservation champions already in the House and electing four new champions who will represent their district's values for environmental protection. As a result of the significantly anti-environmental shift that took hold at the federal level in 2016, community leaders are rising up across the state to represent their neighbors in elected office. These are people who are deeply tied to their communities and will do a fantastic job improving the lives of their constituents.

CVNM Verde Voters Fund distributed [mailers](#) in House Districts 15, 23, 28, 29, 30, 39 and 68. In these districts, a proven conservation champion has an anti-conservation challenger in the general election, or a new leader has grown up from the community and the district can support a more robust conservation performance in the House of Representatives.

Moving Forward

With wins up and down the ballot, New Mexicans will be one step closer toward cleaner water, cleaner air and a fairer economy that supports everyday New Mexicans.

From increasing our state's clean energy investments to reducing methane pollution, several environmental and public health priorities will fall on the next administration and Legislature's agenda. At the same time, New Mexico's environmental community will have to continue fighting the extreme, anti-environmental policies coming out of Washington.

Making progress is not possible without leaders who will put our communities ahead of polluters, which is why CVNM made its largest-ever investment in electing candidates committed to conservation and willing to provide consistent leadership to protect our air, land and water for healthy communities. No matter the result next Tuesday, our work will continue to connect New Mexicans to their political power.

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