



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

DATE: Thursday, January 26, 2023  
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### **Unleashing Opportunity from the Heart and Soul of New Mexico**

*Legislation Establishing the Division of Creative Industries Introduced by Rep. Szczepanski and Sen. Steinborn*

**SANTA FE** – Today, artists, creatives, craftspeople, and entrepreneurs from across New Mexico joined **Representative Reena Szczepanski (D-Santa Fe) and Senator Jeff Steinborn (D-Doña Ana)** in support of House Bill 8, legislation just introduced to establish a Division of Creative Industries within the State Economic Development Department to support the growth of economic opportunity among the full range of creative industries outside of film.

“As we strive to diversify our economy, we must lift up the heart and soul of New Mexico,” **said House Majority Whip Reena Szczepanski**. “From flamenco studios; to potters and furniture makers; to tech, design, and architecture this division will unlock incredible economic potential in our creative and cultural industries, creating good jobs and a larger global footprint for rural, tribal, and urban communities throughout the state.”

“Part of what makes us the Land of Enchantment is because we are home to a rich diversity of artists, creatives, and cultural history that comprise the fabric of New Mexico. With Las Cruces, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe all just named among the best places to live and work for filmmakers, we are seeing the dividends from smart, targeted investments in the arts and creative industries,” **said Senator Jeff Steinborn**. “The Creative Industries Division will expand investment in our artistic and creative assets to support new economic development opportunities.”

Following a similar model as the Division of Outdoor Recreation established in 2019, the Division of Creative Industries would spur job creation and local economic growth by providing grants, professional services, infrastructure capital, workforce training, and business consultation to professionals and entrepreneurs in New Mexico’s creative fields.

Aiming to spur statewide opportunity, House Bill 8 establishes that at least 50% of funding appropriated from the Division would be distributed to rural and underserved communities.

“In McKinley County, 25% of residents—a majority of them Native American—make at least part of their living through the arts. This is an opportunity for the state to recognize one of its preeminent strengths and strategically invest in its heritage, its people, and its future,” **said**

**Rose Eason, Executive Director of GallupARTS.** “It would be a game-changer for Gallup and McKinley County, taking our community's largest cottage industry to the next level for the benefit of all.”

Today, New Mexico’s creative and cultural industry contributes \$5.6 billion to the state economy and provides \$2.4 billion in annual wages. With rich legacies in the fine arts, design, crafts, cuisine, music, and dance, the creative industries are without a doubt an economic strength for New Mexico with incredible untapped potential to expand.

House Bill 8 lays out the scope of the division, proposing an operating budget of \$2 million and a one-time appropriation of \$67 million from the general fund to provide a funding pool to make targeted ongoing investments.

“With targeted investments in this sector—similar to the successful investments that we have made in film—we can identify, enact, and scale the strongest ideas from all across our state, harnessing the potential that’s waiting for us in the minds and spirits of New Mexico’s deeply creative people,” **said Lea Wise-Surguy, executive director of Cruces Creatives.**

“For a state so rooted in deep cultural histories and artistic legacies, it is beyond comprehension that a support and growth system like the one presented in this initiative does not already exist,” **said Rose Simpson, renowned Santa Clara Pueblo-based multi-media artist.**

House Bill 8 has been introduced and assigned to the House Commerce and Economic Development and House Appropriations and Finance Committees.

The legislation has been developed in coalition with the [Creative Industries Consortium](#), artists, entrepreneurs, and community organizations from around the state with a focus on rural New Mexico.

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