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Gov: Capping tax doesn't make sense

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Gov. Susana Martinez talks with area business owners during the annual members' dinner of the Economic Development Corporation of Roswell-Chaves County Wednesday evening. (Mark Wilson Photo)

In her remarks at the annual members' dinner of the Economic Development Corporation of Roswell-Chaves County, Wednesday night, Gov. Susana Martinez focused largely on the oil and gas industry, specifically addressing New Mexico's Pit Rule and Greenhouse Gas rules. The governor outlined her priorities for the upcoming Legislative Special Session, the issues facing the oil and gas industry, and the importance of job creation in the state of New Mexico.

Martinez applauded Roswell for strengthening and expanding its economic base, citing the city's expansion of its capabilities in the aircraft industry and its distinction as having the world's largest mozzarella cheese factory, which she promised she would be back to visit. She stated that job creation is her top priority, but gave credit to New Mexico businesses and not the government for creating jobs.

"A government doesn't create jobs. All a government does is create a positive environment for you to do so. We are not the job creators, you are the job creators."

Martinez noted that unemployment rates are lower in the Southeast region than in other parts of the state. She continued to emphasize throughout her speech that there is still a lot of work to be done.

Speaking briefly about her priorities for the Special Session in September, Martinez said she is working with legislators from both sides of the aisle to make sure New Mexico businesses receive preference when they are bidding on state contracts or state projects.

"Preference needs to be given to contractors in this state with New Mexico businesses who pay New Mexico taxes so that you are given that preference to build state projects."

Another priority the governor said she wants to address at the session revolves around out-of-state companies wishing to relocate their businesses to New Mexico. These businesses are promised an incentive for relocating and Martinez made it clear that she wanted to make sure these businesses actually receive that incentive.

The governor then turned to the issues facing the oil and gas industry. Martinez underlined the value in not overstating the importance of this industry. New Mexico is one of the top oil and natural gas producers in the country, Martinez said, citing that New Mexico has more than 50,000 active wells. "You don't understand how important this industry is to the state because you don't see people working in the oil field. You don't see what is happening and how important it is that you provide 30 percent of the funds and revenue for the general public," she said.

The governor expressed her views on the Greenhouse Gas rules stating that the Environmental Improvement Board, which she appointed, has already come forward to say that the capping tax expressed in the Greenhouse Gas rules does not make any sense. Martinez said that in its July meeting, the EIB indicated it is in full support of the petition to repeal these rules. When dealing with environmental regulation, Martinez said she wants scientific evidence that benefit is coming from this type of regulation.

"If a rule is imposed, what are we getting in exchange," Martinez asked. "If it is nothing, then there is no purpose for that rule."

These rules have to be long-lasting and beneficial, Martinez said. "We are an island in a sea of states. How do we expect to have a positive impact on our environment, on our air, if we border the country of Mexico and no one around us has these same rules. Again we're sending our jobs to other parts of this country," she said. Returning to the topic of the oil and gas industry, Martinez highlighted information she received in a recent briefing from the Tax and Revenue Department.

"In looking at all revenues, royalties, taxes and everything that you pay, 40 percent is paid by the oil and gas industry," she said

"I brag about this part of the state because you're doing fabulous things, because you're (working) together and making sure people are getting back to work. ... I am very committed to being your number one partner in making sure New Mexico starts to create more jobs than Texas."



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