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New Mexico Public Education Department
300 Don Gasper Ave.
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT) to encourage the New Mexico Public Education Department to reject the proposed revision of the New Mexico STEM-Ready Science Standards and instead adopt standards that maintain the original language from the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

The Public Education Department is to be commended for modeling the New Mexico standards on the Next Generation Science Standards, a report that was informed by the *Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas*. The framework is a research-based document published by the National Academies of Sciences and Medicine. It highlighted several central themes necessary to promoting the teaching and learning of modern science, themes that were carried forward by the NGSS.

While some of the New Mexico's science standards are recognizable as performance expectations articulated in NGSS, key alterations to select standards pertaining to evolution and climate change seem to be less about providing students with a high-quality science education and more like an attempt to inject political influence into the curriculum. Examples include:

- The replacement of the specific age of the Earth with the more general "geologic history."
- The removal of the word evolution from, as well as rewording of some standards, to explain biological diversity without mention of coevolution of the Earth's species.
- The rewording of the standards to remove or replace references of climate change and temperature rise with "climate fluctuation."
- The inclusion of standards that have students describe the "benefits associated with technologies related to local industries and energy production."

Scientific content must be presented as it is understood by the scientific community, and supported by experimentation, logical analysis, evidence-based revision, and reliance on detectable and measurable data. By altering the NGSS that meet these criteria, and including standards that clearly do not, New Mexico diminishes its standards-based instructional framework and fails to uphold scientific integrity in the state's classrooms.

As an organization dedicated to biology education, we are confident that students are best served when the curriculum imparts an understanding of science based on the key components of the nature of science and content agreed upon by scientists and professional educators. We join our New Mexico members to support strong science education in your state and urge you to reject the changes to NGSS as proposed in the draft New Mexico STEM-Ready Science Standards.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jaclyn Reeves-Pepin
Executive Director