December 3, 2021

To all New Mexico chile producers and processors,

I write to regretfully inform you that the New Mexico Chile Labor Incentive Program has been forced to suspend assistance to New Mexico chile growers and harvesters, effective immediately, at the request of the New Mexico Legislature.

The state has been deeply grateful to have been able to support your successful green chile harvest this fall by supplementing wages for over 3,000 workers, distributing $2.8 million to New Mexico chile farmers, and as you know, we extended the Chile Labor Incentive Program last month to continue supporting your harvest of the red chile crop. Unfortunately, the Legislature wants unspent funds from the program to be returned to them per the state Supreme Court's recent decision regarding federal funding, effectively ending the program and preventing us from providing further needed assistance to the chile industry.

We are disappointed that the burden of this action may fall on you – but we will continue to be of assistance to you in any way we can, as our mission, as always, is to support the essential work you do to feed New Mexicans the best chile in the world. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your local legislators and ask that they not seek to recoup the remaining funds so we are able to resume this program, which we believe has been very beneficial.

We encourage growers, producers and processors to continue to track eligible expenses though January 31, 2022, as we work to have the program reinstated. Additional questions may be submitted to clip@nmda.nmsu.edu.

Thank you,

Jeff M. Witte