



NEWS RELEASE

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Dummy Bills and Hydrogen Hub

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico is alarmed by recent developments in the New Mexico Legislature that circumvent the public's right to know and understand legislation under consideration. A functioning democracy requires transparency, fairness and informed public participation.

The attempt to get legislation on the hydrogen hub lays bare a habit that the League has long criticized – the use and abuse of bills to protect Peace, Health, Safety and Welfare, or “dummy” bills.” These are bills filed at the end of a filing period in the Legislature to allow introduction of “emergency” measures.

Bills related to developing a blue hydrogen economy have been tabled in two committees, and one was withdrawn by the Speaker and placed on his table, where he said it will remain until the end of the session. But, just a day later a new bill, HB228, popped up. This one and another, HB227, are named Peace, Health, Safety and Welfare bills; their true purpose is not reflected in the title.

For years the League has highlighted the transparency and fairness issues in the use of the Peace, Health, Safety and Welfare bills. While we understand the need at times to introduce an “emergency” bill, this process has been abused, and no more so than with the Hydrogen Hub bills. This is a legislative parlor trick that circumvents the clear intent of the State Constitution.

A functioning democracy requires transparency and fairness in the law-making process to ensure that the public is informed and can participate knowledgeably in the affairs of importance to them. A functioning democracy is fueled by an engaged and informed public that has an opportunity to participate in a civil and respectful partnership with lawmakers. Unfortunately, the New Mexico Legislature appears to be obfuscating the law-making process, leaving the public in the dark. The consequences are likely to be a public that loses trust in the law-making process, and in the lawmakers themselves.

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico respectfully requests that the New Mexico Legislature examine the process that has been used this year for advancing the Hydrogen Hub Development Act and put strong guardrails up to prevent such abuse in the future.