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## **Senator Crystal Diamond (R) and Senator Jeff Steinborn (D) Secure Funding to Extend Chile Labor Program**

SANTA FE— With only 72 hours left in the 2022 Legislative Budget Session, Republican **Senator Crystal Diamond** (District 35-Doña Ana, Luna, Hidalgo, and Sierra) and Democrat **Senator Jeff Steinborn** (District 36-Doña Ana) were successful in extending the [chile labor program](#) by securing \$1 million dollars in the budget for the initiative.

In 2021, legislators lobbied to create the fund following reports of dire labor shortages for the harvest of our state's signature crop. The one-time appropriation of federal pandemic relief dollars was used to temporarily bolster the wages of chile workers. Following the news that Senate Bill 157, the Chile Labor Incentive Program, had been included in this year's budget, bill sponsors, Senator Diamond and Senator Steinborn, who both represent the iconic Hatch Valley, released the following statements:

"This temporary aid will help our family farms in desperate need of workers. Our agriculture industry is the backbone of our state's economy, and for every community and family that relies on a strong chile harvest, this wage program represents a small step toward recovery," said Senator Diamond.

"As our chile farmers struggle to find workers to harvest our prized state chile crop, it's essential that we help support them meet the global demand. Hatch and New Mexico have worked hard to establish a global brand for our chile, and we want to ensure we meet the demand," said Senator Steinborn.

House Bill 2, which includes this key provision, now goes before the full Senate.

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