



---

## Retake Our Democracy: Developing a Roundhouse Bill Summary

---

The template itself appears below, but first a brief description of the resources available to you in developing the bill, how to organize and develop a summary, and how bills will be used.

**How Will the Summary be Used:** In the beginning of the 2019 Legislative Session, we will have developed summaries for all the bills we plan to support. We will draw upon these summaries to produce a MUST PASS BILLS Brochure so that we can share with legislators the bills we will be watching closely. We will also use the summary to create a MUST PASS Bill Flyer for each of our bills. We will also use the summary, especially the bulleted part describing why the bill would be good for New Mexicans, for the Roundhouse Rapid Response Network alerts. This will make it easy for Network members to write to their elected representative just before the bill goes to committee.

**How Can You Develop a Bill Summary:** First, you will use the template below to structure your work. The summary example that follows will give you an idea about the scope of the summary and how many words are appropriate to each element of the summary. One thing to keep in mind: Roundhouse legislators will be getting information on as many as 5-10,000 bills likely to be introduced in both Houses during the first half of the 2019 Legislative Session and they have limited time to read and consider information about each bill they will vote on, whether in Committee or on their respective Floors. It is important that we include only the most important information as concisely as possible. Resources you can use to develop a bill summary:

- **NMLegis.gov.** This site has a wealth of information on our legislators, on bills in the Legislature and on when and where committee hearings will be scheduled. You should definitely take a tour of the Roundhouse. Free tours are available during weekdays at the desk located at the East Entrance to the building. On the home page you will see that there is a search engine for finding legislation with a few options for searching for your bill. I have found searching with Key Words to be a very frustrating process. The best search to conduct is if you have the bill number or know the name of the bill sponsor. That will get you to the full text of the bill, the official title of the bill, the Sponsor(s), and any actions that were taken in the current session. Notice that the far left button asks for the “Session” and 2018 is the most recent year. That is because 2019 bills can only be “pre-filed” starting December 17, 2018 through January 11, 2019 and

the text of the bills will be posted on the website usually the day after they are filed with the respective Clerks of each House. There will be no Committee referrals listed however. Committee referrals are announced when the bills are formally introduced on the Floor of each House after the 2019 Session begins on January 15, 2019. In the meantime, we can use this search engine to find information on the bills we have supported in the 2017 and 2018 Legislative Sessions. Anyone planning to develop bill summaries should take the time to explore what is available once you get to the [NM Legislative website](#) for any bill. Among those things you will find:

- Bill title
- Bill #
- Bill sponsor(s)
- The date it was introduced
- The year the bill is introduced and whether in a Regular or Special Session
- Any votes that may have been taken
- Analysis: Clicking here will take you to the Fiscal Impact Report. While the FIR is intended to describe its fiscal impact, it also almost always includes a concise summary of the bill and its potential impact. It is an excellent source of info.
- Committee Bill Analyses. Developed by Committee Analysts before the bill is heard in Committee, this document is not posted on the Legislative website but is considered public information. It is helpful to determine what the Committee members are reading about the bill from their Committee Analysts, as we would want to be sure to address any concerns raised or highlight any benefit noted in the Committee Bill Analysis. You need to specifically request a copy of this document from the Committee Analysts or Committee Secretary, either in person or by phone call, BEFORE the Committee hearing begins.
- Floor Amendments
- Actions. This is also useful as you can find out what happened in each committee, whether it was passed and if so, then whether it next goes to another committee or to the floor for a vote.
- Governor vetoes
- **Retake Our Democracy 2018 Legislative Priorities.** Here you will find 29 bills summarized in something like the format we will want to use in 2019. The primary difference is that the purpose of these summaries was for educating our constituency and so, often the summaries are longer and more detailed than what we will want for our legislative bill summaries. Still this is actually a great source as almost all of our MUST PASS bills are listed at this link and copying and pasting from there will be a very efficient way to get started. [Retake Our Democracy Priority Bills 2018](#)

- **The Bill Sponsor.** If you can't find good information on why the bill would be good for New Mexicans, then the bill sponsor might be able to help you. The problem is that legislators are very busy and if they don't know you, they are unlikely to make time to respond to your outreach in any meaningful way.
- **Google.** Another source of information on bill benefits is simply use Google. Run a search like: "benefits of raising the minimum wage" or "risks from long-term solitary confinement." Examples of how a similar bill has worked in other states is always useful.

### **Bill Summary Template**

The bill template will be comprised of six or seven elements, the one optional element being "organizations supporting the bill." It would be great to get that, but it may not be easy to locate organizations.

- Bill #, Bill Title. Easily obtained from NMlegis.gov
- Bill Sponsor(s). Easily obtained from NMlegis.gov
- Organizations supporting the bill. The best way to find out organizations supporting the bill will be from intuition. Abortion related bill: Planned Parenthood. Election reform: Common Cause. Once you identify the organization you think might support the bill, you can reach out to them and get their ok to include them in the flyer and to get information on other organizations supporting the bill. The organization will also be a good source for why the bill is good for New Mexicans.
- Bill Description Easily obtained from NMlegis.gov in the FIR or from Retake at the link above.
- History: Easily obtained from NMlegis.gov in the FIR or from Retake at the link above. New bills will not have much history.
- Why Bill # is Good for New Mexicans: FIR, Retake site, Sponsor or organizations supporting the bill.
- Link to full bill. NMlegis.gov. Keep in mind bills will be amended and so we will want to be sure link goes to the most current version, not easy and obviously not done prior to the bill being introduced.

See the next page for an example of a Bill Summary.

## **HB 338/ SB 342. The Community Solar Gardens Act (2017 Regular Session)**

**Sponsors:** Sen. Linda Lopez (SB 342) and Rep. Patricia Caballero (HB 338)

**Description:** Introduced by Sen. Linda M. Lopez (SB 342) and Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero (HB 338), the bill promotes the development of solar gardens statewide. A solar garden is a solar electric generation facility that can generate no more than 10 megawatts of power and that has subscribers who are allocated a share of the electricity generated. A city, business, home owner’s association, school district or other organization could develop a solar garden to supply energy to the business or organization building the garden.

### **Organizations Supporting SB 342 and HB 338**

- Sierra Club
- Conservation Voters of New Mexico
- 350.org
- New Energy Economy
- Retake Our Democracy

**History:** SB 342 received a Do Pass recommendation from the Senate Conservation Committee, then was referred to the Senate Corporations and Transportation Committee, which took no action before the end of the session. The bill therefore died on adjournment, also known as “API or “Action Postponed Indefinitely”, in reality, postponed until the next Legislative Session if chosen to be re-introduced by a legislator.

HB 338 received Do Pass recommendations from the House State Government, Indian and Veterans’ Affairs Committee and (with amendments) the House Judiciary Committee. It died on the House Floor (Floor vote of 31 yes,34 no, with 1 excused and 4 absent).

### **Why SB 342 /HB 338 are Good for New Mexico and New Mexicans:**

- Enables organizations public and private to invest in renewables and reduce their carbon foot print.
- Creates jobs among local solar producers;
- Reduces New Mexico’s reliance on fossil fuels;

Links [full text of bill](#); [summary page SB 342](#); [summary page HB 338](#) (2017 Regular Legislative Session)