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**State Auditor Tim Keller Outlines Plan for State Intervention of
Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission**
State Action Will Ensure Viability of Work During Time of Turmoil

SANTA FE, NM – New Mexico State Auditor Tim Keller called on the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) to assume the financial operations of the troubled Martin Luther King, Jr. State Commission. In an attached letter sent today, Auditor Keller notified the Commission’s Board that the best path to ensure the viability of the agency and its important work is for DFA to take over the Commission’s day-to-day financial operations.

“The state of turmoil at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission places their important work in jeopardy. The best way to ensure the viability of the Commission is for another state agency to temporarily assume its financial operations,” stated Auditor Keller. “We are taking the prudent step of suspending the audit process and calling on the Department of Finance and Administration to run the day-to-day operations of the Commission until the smoke clears.”

Providing DFA assistance at this time is critical to help ensure the long-term viability of the Commission as an independent entity and enable it to continue to provide services to the State of New Mexico. The OSA also considers this approach the best possible route to progressing towards achieving auditable financial statements, which would provide a transparent accounting of public funds.

“Having the state step in will help preserve the current and future work of the Commission, regardless of the outcome of the investigation,” stated Auditor Keller.

Representatives from OSA will be in attendance at the Regular Board Meeting of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission on February 2, 2016 at 2:00pm.

In 2015, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission was placed on the OSA “At Risk,” and then again in January 2016, due to its failure to file the required annual audits. Earlier this year, the contract to complete audits was finalized for the missing fiscal years. The OSA was investigating allegations concerning fraud, waste and abuse as part of the audit process.

OSA is now suspending the annual audit process in light of the Office of the Attorney General’s (OAG) investigation and the related seizure of computers and all financial documents, and will refer any material regarding criminal allegations to the OAG to expedite its investigation.

The Office of the State Auditor helps government work better by providing transparency and accountability for government spending; informing policy choices; and tackling fraud, waste and abuse. OSA is an independently elected executive agency responsible for examining the use of public dollars in New Mexico.

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