
Meeting Date: December 9, 2020
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: C-20-38 – 2021 State Legislative Priorities

ACTION: Recommend Approval

SUMMARY:

The Water Authority has ten recommended State Legislative Priorities for 2021 Session.

1. Kirtland Air Force Base Bulk Fuels Facility Data Gap Groundwater Monitoring Well – Design/Construction – \$1 Million

The Water Authority identified the need for a groundwater monitoring well at depth in the northern end of known ethylene dibromide (EDB) groundwater contamination for the Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) Bulk Fuels Facility (BFF) project in 2014. This well is necessary to determine with confidence that the EDB is not present at depth, potentially migrating towards Water Authority supply wells. Without fully determining EDB at depth, it is possible that the Air Force will design and build a final remedy that does not address all EDB in groundwater and therefore the risk to Water Authority wells will persist into the indefinite future. Since 2014, the Water Authority is reiterated the need for this well in technical working group meetings and technical discussions with the NMED and the Air Force. The Air Force has resisted installing this well and therefore the Water Authority is proceeding with contracting a consulting firm to site, design, and install a groundwater monitoring well to fill deep EDB data gap. This well will help to complete a critical data gap at the BFF site, supporting the Water Authority in its understanding of the plume extent and migration and review of the final remedy for its adequacy in treating groundwater contamination at the site. The Water Authority will also coordinate with the NMED for integration of this well into the quarterly groundwater monitoring program for the site. The estimated cost for this well is \$1 Million.

2. Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) Sewer Pipeline – \$4,200,000

The Water Authority operates Bernalillo County MDC's lagoon wastewater treatment system which captures and treats the MDC sewer discharge. This lagoon system has had challenges maintaining permit compliance. The proposed MDS sewer pipeline would connect Bernalillo County MDC to the Water Authority sewer system, so that the lagoon system could be removed from service. This project would ultimately provide a cost savings

to the County as operating and maintaining the antiquated lagoon wastewater treatment system is considerably more expensive than maintaining the sewer system. The total cost of this project is estimated to be \$4,200,000. The Water Authority supports Bernalillo County's request of \$3,500,000 to plan, design, construct and equip a sanitary sewer line to service MDC.

3. Southside Water Reclamation Plant (SWRP) Outfall Realignment Project – \$2,800,000

This project would realign the SWRP effluent outfall to the Rio Grande, creating additional habitat for the silvery minnow (endangered species), improving water quality, and providing additional public access to the Bosque. Bench testing has demonstrated that the silvery minnow prefers SWRP effluent to Rio Grande water. This project would provide approximately 15 acres of new habitat area and 18 acres of revegetation. The wetland created would support improved river water quality. Approximately 4,800 linear feet of new trails would provide additional public access to the Bosque and further opportunities for education and outreach on water resources, endangered species protection and the Bosque environment. This project would be funded in part by approximately \$570,000 in settlement funding from the Office of the Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT).

4. Bosque Non-potable Water Reclamation Plant and Reuse System – \$1.5 Million

Consistent with Water 2120, this project extends the utility's water resources through conservation and direct and indirect potable reuse. The Bosque project would provide non-potable water for industrial purposes and irrigation needs to parks, schools, and golf courses. The Water Authority has secured the land for the construction and operation of the new wastewater treatment plant and has also completed the feasibility study required by the Bureau of Reclamation under the Title XVI requirements. The feasibility study was approved by the Bureau of Reclamation and is eligible to move forward towards NEPA with this authorization. This project will provide 3 to 5 million gallons per day (3,000 – 7,000 acre-feet per year) of non-potable reuse water for the westside of Albuquerque including parks, golf courses and potentially for industrial uses. The facility is planned as part of the Water Authority's 100-year water plan and will consist of a new completely enclosed wastewater reuse plant, reservoir to store the water and pipelines to distribute the non-potable water to the various irrigation and industrial sites. In the winter when water demands are lower, the purified effluent will be discharged to the Rio Grande. The new wastewater reuse plant will be located on Water Authority property just north of the Bosque High School and education will be a central part of the facility.

The Water Authority received funding from the NM State Legislature and is also proceeding with this project. The first phase which is underway includes finalizing the layouts for the facility (conceptual design) and submission of a NPDES permit to discharge to the Rio Grande south of Montano Road. The Water Authority is seeking funding to complete the first phase and to begin the second phase that consists of preliminary and final design. The

last phase would be the construction of the facility and that could be completed in smaller phases consistent with extension of the pipelines to the irrigation sites.

5. Tijeras Reuse Project – \$1.0 Million

Consistent with Water 2120, this project extends the utility's water resources through conservation and direct and indirect potable reuse. The Water Authority would like to thank KAFB for providing the needed 24-acre site for the construction and operation of the Tijeras non-potable Water Reclamation Plant. This project will provide 3 to 5 million gallons per day (3,000 – 7,000 acre-feet per year) of non-potable reuse water for the eastside of Albuquerque to provide additional non-potable water for irrigation and aquifer storage and recovery (drinking water source). The facility is planned as part of the Water Authority's 100-year water plan and will consist of a new completely enclosed wastewater reuse plant, reservoir to store the water and pipelines to distribute the non-potable water to the various irrigation sites and to discharge into the Tijeras arroyo as part of a comprehensive aquifer storage and recovery program. In the winter when water demands are lower, the purified effluent will be discharged to the Tijeras Arroyo and will be allowed to infiltrate into the aquifer for future use.

The Water Authority received funding from the NM State Legislature and is proceeding with the first phase of the project including conceptual design and permitting process. The Water Authority is seeking additional funding to complete the first phase and to start the second phase of the project that consists of preliminary and final design with the last phase to be construction of the new plant and associated pipelines.

6. Aquifer Storage and Recovery – \$1.0 Million

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) is an important water resources management tool that provides the ability store San Juan-Chama water in the aquifer for droughts. ASR is a vital part of the Water Authority's 100-year Water Plan (Water 2120). This request would fund permitting and design for the next phase of the direct injection or an infiltration project on the eastside of Albuquerque.

7. Carnuel Wastewater Improvements Project – Planning/Design – \$2.5 Million

The Water Authority completed a design analysis report (DAR) in 2019, which provided three different alternatives for expanding sanitary sewer in the Phase 1 area. The recommended approach is to install a low-pressure system for Phase 1. The estimated cost to construct the Phase 1 improvements is \$2.5 Million. This project will replace aging, leaking septic systems, by connecting these homes to a public sanitary sewer system. This project will assist in improving water quality in the Carnuel community and the Tijeras watershed. This project will also help residents comply with Bernalillo County's Wastewater Systems Ordinance.

8. To'Hajiilee Pipeline – \$4,965,000

The To'Hajiilee Chapter is a non-contiguous section of the Navajo reservation located west of Albuquerque. The community has six drinking water wells, five of which are no longer operable. The last operational well is unreliable and has gone out of service 3 times in the last five years. When the well is working, it does not produce enough water to satisfy the community's needs, and the quality of the water is poor. Residents complain that it corrodes pipes, stains clothes, and has a foul odor. The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified the need for clean water to be available for To'Hajiilee.

In 2006, the Water Authority entered into an agreement to assist To'Hajiilee to receive water provided by the Navajo Nation once the facilities to convey water to To'Hajiilee when funding to construct a conveyance line is available. The State of New Mexico has encouraged assisting To'Hajiilee to obtain clean drinking water. The Water Authority has applied for 2021 Water Trust Board funding in the amount of \$4,965,000 for the To'Hajiilee Water Supply Pipeline. This pipeline will provide the Chapter community with access to clean water. The Navajo Nation would provide the water to be conveyed to the Chapter. The Water Authority would not pay for any aspect of this project with rate payer funds.

9. Review of Governmental Gross Receipts Tax

Support a review of the contribution of Governmental Gross Receipts Taxes to the New Mexico Finance Authority and the allocation of resources for projects, which provided for interconnection of disadvantaged systems, public health and safety and water conservation and reuse projects. The Water Authority is the largest contributor of Governmental Gross Receipts Taxes and receives very little return on this contribution in terms of funded projects. The region has many unfunded interconnection projects of disadvantaged systems, which could use funding and is often not supported by NMFA. Additionally, there are many unfunded conservation and reuse projects which required funding to advance. It would be helpful if the GGRT allocation to NMFA could be reduced and allow these projects to go forward.

10. Oppose Legislation Negatively Impacting Water Authority Resiliency

The Water Authority opposes any legislation that a) adversely affects funding or imposes additional fees; b) proposes any mandatory rate revenue reduction measures; c) diminishes the Water Authority's regulatory authority or its ability to plan for future generations; d) adversely affects the sustainability of the Water Authority organization; e) adversely affects Water Authority's ratepayers.