
Meeting Date: April 22, 2026

Staff Contact: Diane Agnew, Water Rights Program Manager

TITLE: R-26-12 – Authorizing the Executive Director to Enter into an Agreement with the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque for the Lease of San Juan-Chama Project Surface Water for Irrigation at the Larry P. Abraham Agri-Nature Center

ACTION: Recommend Approval

SUMMARY:

The Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Water Authority) has previously leased quantities of San Juan-Chama Project surface water to entities for consumptive use, including the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. The Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque (Los Ranchos) is seeking water for irrigation at the Larry P. Abraham Agri-Nature Center where Los Ranchos demonstrates regenerative agriculture and provides agricultural education. Los Ranchos has previously partnered with Explora! to host camps and they provide workshops and resources to farmers and gardeners. The Agri-Nature Center also hosts a community garden and demonstrates supporting wildlife through strategic plantings.

This agreement provides up to 30 acre-feet per year of San Juan-Chama Project surface water, for a total term of two (2) years, at a rate of \$100 per acre-foot. The total amount billed to Los Rachos will be based on actual water diverted by the Agri-Nature Center. The agreement will provide water to Los Ranchos until they are able to secure recognized surface water rights for irrigation at the Agri-Nature Center. The quantity of leased water includes conveyance loss rates between Abiquiu Reservoir and Los Ranchos. Additionally, the Water Authority will support Los Ranchos in coordination of releases from Abiquiu Reservoir for diversion by Los Ranchos. Approval of this agreement will be consistent with previous lease agreements and will support Los Ranchos in their continued work to educate and demonstrate best practices for agriculture in the Middle Rio Grande.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Water Authority will be paid \$100 per acre-foot for San Juan-Chama Project surface water diverted by Los Ranchos for irrigation at the Agri-Nature Center. The funding will be placed into the Water 2120 Decade Plan for implementing Water 2120 projects.

ALBUQUERQUE BERNALILLO COUNTY WATER UTILITY AUTHORITY

BILL NO. R-26-12

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RESOLUTION

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AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH

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THE VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS DE ALBUQUEQUER FOR THE LEASE OF SAN JUAN-

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CHAMA PROJECT SURFACE WATER FOR IRRIGATION AT THE LARRY P. ABRAHAM

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AGRI-NATURE CENTER

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WHEREAS, Los Ranchos is working toward completion and operation of the

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Larry P. Abraham Agri-Nature Center (the "Agri-Nature Center") which includes the

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irrigation of approximately 18 acres for purposes consistent with the goals of the Agri-

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Nature Center; and

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WHEREAS, Los Ranchos has acquired water rights associated with the parcel of

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Agri-Nature Center irrigatable land and is pending transfer of the deed to the property

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and approval from the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) for the

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delivery of those rights; and

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WHEREAS, during the pendency of the final transfer of its water rights for the

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Agri-Nature Center, Los Ranchos is interested in leasing San Juan-Chama Project

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("SJCP") surface water from the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority

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(Water Authority) for the irrigation of the 18 acres of irrigatable land associated with the

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Agri-Nature Center; and

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WHEREAS, the Water Authority is interested in providing a reliable source of

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water for irrigation of acreage at the Agri-Nature Center in support of the center's history

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of successful regenerative agriculture and education, consistent with the policies of the

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Water Authority's 100-year water management strategy Water 2120; and

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WHEREAS, the Water Authority currently has previous annual allocations of

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SJCP water stored in Abiquiu Reservoir and is willing to make a portion of its stored

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water available to Los Ranchos for the purpose of irrigation of acreage assigned to the

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Agri-Nature Center for beneficial consumptive use within the Middle Rio Grande, State

1 of New Mexico under the terms and conditions further described herein, consistent with
2 the applicable Federal and State laws; and

3 WHEREAS, the Water Authority and Los Ranchos understand that conveyance
4 of the leased SJCP water to the Agri-Nature Center will require coordination with
5 MRGCD, and is subject to any infrastructure or policy limits of the Middle Rio Grande
6 Conservancy District (MRGCD); and

7 WHEREAS, the Water Authority agrees to lease up to 30 acre-feet of San Juan-
8 Project surface water for consumptive use by Los Ranchos, for a term of two (2) years,
9 when Los Ranchos does not have surface water rights for diversion and delivery by
10 MRGCD; and

11 WHEREAS, Los Ranchos agrees to pay \$100 per acre-foot of water diverted for
12 irrigation at the Agri-Nature Center.

13 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE WATER AUTHORITY:

14 That the Executive Director shall have the authority to act on behalf of the Water
15 Authority to sign an agreement whereby the Water Authority will provide up to 30 acre-
16 feet of San Juan-Chama Project surface water for irrigation at the Larry P. Abraham
17 Agri-Nature Center at a fee of \$100 per acre-foot.