
Meeting Date: November 17, 2021
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: C-21-30 – 2022 State Legislative Priorities

ACTION: Recommend Approval

SUMMARY:

The Water Authority has ten recommended State Legislative Priorities for 2022 Session.

1. Bosque Non-potable Water Reclamation Plant and Reuse System – \$3 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 America's Recovery Program Act (ARPA) and is also proceeding with design and environmental clearances for 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 design and easement acquisition. 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.

2. Winrock On-site Resource Recover Plant – \$1.5 Million

This project includes the design and construction of a new on-site wastewater plant which will provide reclaimed water irrigation for the 83-acre Winrock site and for the public parks in the surrounding area. The project will reduce potable water use by providing reclaimed

water for the uses that don't require high quality water. Uses included irrigation, water features, or toilet flushing. The wastewater plant is rated at 60,000 gallons per day, but it is expandable to meet increased demand in Albuquerque Uptown and Northeast Heights. This project provides for a public private partnership showcasing a cutting-edge approach for innovative water conservation techniques and strategies.

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

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. South-to-North Reuse Pipeline Project – \$3 Million

This project would plan, design and construct a pipeline that would connect the Water Authority's two existing non-potable water systems, allowing reclaimed wastewater effluent from the Southside Water Reclamation Plant (SWRP) to be used to irrigate turf throughout a much larger portion of the service area on the east side of the Rio Grande. This pipeline would also enable the Water Authority to store significantly more water from the Alameda subsurface river diversion using aquifer storage and recovery at the existing Bear Canyon surface infiltration gallery. This project aligns with Water 2120, the Water Authority's 100-year water resources management strategy. It provides drought resiliency and improves sustainability, maximizing water reuse which reduces energy consumption, reduces the need to pump groundwater, and reserves high quality drinking water for other uses. A technical memorandum was prepared for this project and identified the total project cost to be approximately \$30,000,000. This capital outlay request is anticipated to take the project through final design.

5. Aquifer Storage and Recovery – \$2 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.

6. Kirtland Air Force Base Bulk Fuels Facility for Additional 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 data gap well received \$770,000 in 2021 capital outlay and is currently in design, with construction completion anticipated in December 2021. If EDB is detected in samples collected from the data gap well, the Water Authority may pursue capital outlay funding in the 2022 legislative session for construction of an additional monitoring well. The estimated cost for an additional monitoring well is \$1 Million.

7. Northwest Capacity Improvement and Expansion Project– up to \$65 Million

Intel recently announced plans to expand the production capability of their facility in Rio Rancho. This expansion will create approximately 700 new high-paying jobs at Intel and is expected to indirectly create another 2,500 jobs in the local economy. One of the requirements for this expansion is additional water to support production. Intel recently reached out to the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Water Authority) to provide water service. In order to provide this service, substantial infrastructure is required to convey water to Intel, while continuing to provide uninterrupted service to current customers. Intel is required to install a \$31M dedicated non-potable water transmission line and equip two existing high arsenic wells. The drinking water infrastructure in this part of the system was obtained through the acquisition of New Mexico Utilities which lacks water transmission capacity and redundancy. In order to make the requested water available to Intel, the Water Authority requires approximately \$34M in water treatment and transmission improvements, including a new arsenic treatment plant and drinking water pump station improvements, transmission pipelines and reservoir.

The Water Authority's water resources strategy (Water 2120) supports full utilization of surface water when available, while storing and preserving groundwater to be used in times of drought. Expanding service to Intel is supportive of multiple Water 2120 policies. Intel will be utilizing high arsenic impaired groundwater. Intel returns over 80 percent of water delivered in the form of wastewater, which serves as a source of supply for reuse water. By providing additional water service to Intel they will not need to acquire native pre-1907 (i.e. agricultural) water rights to expand their process. The arsenic treatment plant will also provide drought resiliency, putting five existing high arsenic wells back in service.

8. 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.