
Meeting Date: November 19, 2014
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: C-14-31 – 2015 State Legislative Priorities

ACTION: Recommend Approval

SUMMARY:

The Water Authority has six recommended State Legislative Priorities for 2015 Session.

1. Bosque Non-potable Water Reclamation Plant and Reuse System

To ensure a safe and sustainable water supply into the future, the Water Authority has planned the development of the Bosque Non-potable Water Reclamation Plant and Reuse system on the Westside of Albuquerque. The project will provide non-potable water for industrial purposes and irrigation needs to parks, schools, and golf courses. In addition, the Bosque Non-potable Water Reclamation Plant will discharge water to the Rio Grande during the non-irrigation season with additional opportunities for aquifer storage and recovery along the Calabacillas arroyo. The project will provide non-potable water to Intel, Mariposa Regional Park, Bosque School, Ladera and Desert Greens golf courses, and other schools and athletic facilities. By providing non-potable water for irrigation and industrial needs, the project will help preserve and protect the aquifer. During the non-irrigation season, non-potable water will be discharged into the Rio Grande for environmental purposes with opportunities to utilize the water for aquifer storage and recovery.

The Water Authority is seeking \$750,000 in state funding to complete the necessary environmental studies and permitting for the project. The environmental studies will include NEPA and NPDES permitting for discharge to the Rio Grande during non-irrigation season. The Water Authority is working with the federal delegation to obtain an authorization for federal funding under the Title XVI program, which would provide up to 25% of the total funding for reuse and reclamation projects.

2. Aquifer Storage & Recovery (ASR)

The Water Authority is seeking \$2.5 million funding in two phases (Total of \$5.0 million) to continue the Aquifer Storage and Recovery program. The program was developed following the legislative approval of the Ground Water Storage and Recovery Act in 1999. Aquifer Storage and Recovery is a critical water management tool that allows for temporary or long-term storage of surface into the aquifer to reduce evaporation and to provide a sustainable supply for residents in the Middle Rio Grande. Design of the project is underway and the additional phased funding would provide for the construction of two injection wells at the Water Authority's surface water treatment plant. ASR is a critical component of the Water Authority's Water Resources Management Strategy to provide a safe and sustainable water supply.

3. Carnuel Water Systems Improvement Project

As fiscal agent on behalf of Carnuel, the Water Authority has applied for \$900,000 in state capital outlay funding for Phase 2b of the Carnuel Water Project. Phase 2a will be completed by the end of 2014. Phase 2b is a continuation of the work in the Echo Canyon area and along State Road 333. Phase 2b is designed and will be ready-to-bid. The Carnuel area is faced with continuing problems of water quality degradation due to failing septic systems, and poor soil conditions and topography. This project will provide clean, reliable drinking water and fire protection to Carnuel residents.

4. Review of Governmental Gross Receipts Tax

Support legislation, which reviews 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.

5. State and Regional Water Planning

Support continued funding to update all regional water plans. For FY16, the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) has requested \$255,000 in contractual services in its operating budget. The Water Authority supports this funding appropriation to build on the funding that the ISC secured with the NM Finance Authority last year to update both the State Water Plan and the 16 different planning regions. It is critical that the regional water plans are based on the same hydrologic information in addition to future projections for supply and demand. Additional funding will allow the ISC to continue to update all of the required technical data that will then be funneled back to the regions and support the efforts to update all regional plans. The current State Water Plan is disconnected with the regional water plans, continued funding to update regional plans and integrate them with the state plan would rectify this matter and improve water planning overall.

6. UNM North Golf Course Water Conservation Project

Support a \$150,000 capital outlay request to plan, design and construct a pipeline for re-use of the chiller blow-down water from the UNM Main Campus. The UNM North Golf Course is located on the north of Lomas Boulevard and south of Indian School Boulevard on north side of Tucker Avenue, in Albuquerque on the UNM Campus. This request would enable the University to integrate 17 million gallons/year of chiller blow-down water into the irrigation system, water that would otherwise be discharged into the ABCWUA wastewater system. Reuse of that water will relieve the University of the need to pump an equivalent amount from the aquifer.