
Meeting Date: December 7, 2022
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: C-22-40 – 2023 State Legislative Priorities

ACTION: Recommend Approval

SUMMARY:

The Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Water Authority) has nine recommended State of New Mexico Legislative Priorities for the 2023 Session.

1. Bosque Non-potable Water Reclamation Plant and Reuse System – \$3.0 Million

Consistent with Water 2120, this project extends the Water Authority's water resources through conservation and direct and indirect potable reuse. The Bosque Resource and Recovery Plant project would provide non-potable water for industrial purposes and irrigation needs to area parks, schools, and golf courses. The Water Authority has secured land for the construction and operation of the new wastewater reuse treatment plant and has also completed the feasibility study required by the Bureau of Reclamation under the Title XVI requirements. The feasibility study, approved by the Bureau of Reclamation, is eligible to move forward towards the National Environmental Policy Act (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. This planned facility is part of Water 2120, the Water Authority's 100-year water resources management strategy 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 discharge 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 capital outlay funding agreements from the 2020 and 2021 NM State Legislature Sessions and the America's Recovery Program Act (ARPA) and is 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 the design and easement acquisition. The last phase would construct the facility and extend reuse pipeline. As an alternative, the

construction of the facility can be phased out into smaller buildouts consistent with the extension of pipelines to the irrigation sites.

2. South-to-North Reuse Pipeline Project – \$3.0 Million

This project would connect the Water Authority's two existing non-potable water systems, allowing reclaimed wastewater effluent from the Southside Water Reclamation Plant (SWRP) 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. The technical memorandum identified the total project cost to be approximately \$30 million. This capital outlay request will complete the final design phase.

3. Aquifer Storage and Recovery – \$2.0 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 Water 2120, the Water Authority's 100-year water resources management strategy. This request would fund permitting and design for the next phase of the direct injection or an infiltration project in Albuquerque.

4. Thomas Wells Arsenic Treatment Plant - \$4.5 Million

The Thomas well field has four existing wells with a total production capacity of approximately 12.5 MGD. All Thomas wells produce water above the arsenic drinking water maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10-parts per billion. Thomas wells use a limited capacity by blending with water from wells with low arsenic. A new arsenic treatment plant will place the existing wells back into full production and make better use of these abandoned assets. Thomas wells are located within a high-density part of the distribution system that is experiencing capacity issues. The proposed Thomas Wells Arsenic Plant will improve system resiliency and drought preparedness, especially when surface water is not available.

5. Winrock On-site Resource Recovery Plant – \$1.5 Million

This project includes the construction of a new on-site wastewater reuse plant that will provide reclaimed water irrigation for the 83-acre Winrock site and for the public parks in the surrounding area. The Water Authority has secured right of way and access control line of Louisiana Boulevard from the New Mexico Department of Transportation. This project will reduce potable water use by providing reclaimed water for the uses that do not require high quality water. Uses included irrigation, water features, or toilet flushing. The wastewater reuse plant plan is to produce 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 highlighting an innovative approach for water conservation techniques and strategies.

6. Southside Water Reclamation Plant (SWRP) Outfall Realignment Project – \$2.0 Million

This project will realign the SWRP effluent outfall to the Rio Grande, create additional habitat for the silvery minnow (endangered species), improve water quality, and provide additional public access to the Bosque. Bench testing has demonstrated that the silvery minnow prefers SWRP effluent to Rio Grande water. This project will provide approximately fifteen acres of new habitat area and eighteen acres of revegetation. The wetland created would support improved river water quality. Approximately 4,800 linear feet of new trails will 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 is partially funded by a \$570,000 settlement from the Office of the Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT).

7. Source Water Protection Groundwater Monitoring Well – \$1.0 Million

The Water Authority has identified the need for additional groundwater monitoring well(s) at the northern extent of groundwater contamination for the Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) Bulk Fuels Facility (BFF) project. Existing monitoring wells at the site do not measure and monitor contaminant movement in the aquifer. Additional monitoring well(s) is needed to determine with confidence if contamination is potentially migrating towards Water Authority supply wells. The Air Force has not proposed any monitoring wells in this area. If ethylene dibromide (EDB) is missed, 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. This well(s) will help to complete a critical data gap at the BFF site, supporting the Water Authority in its understanding of the contamination and review of the final remedy for its adequacy in treating groundwater contamination at the site. The Water Authority will work with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) for integration of this well(s) into the site data and quarterly monitoring.

8. Carnuel Wastewater Improvements Project - \$2.5 Million

The Water Authority completed a design analysis report (DAR) in 2019, which provides three different alternatives for expanding sanitary sewer in the Carnuel 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.

The Water Authority received a capital outlay funding agreement from the 2021 NM State Legislature Session and funding from the America's Recovery Program Act (ARPA) and is proceeding with design and environmental clearances for this project. This project will replace aging, leaking septic systems, by connecting 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.

9. 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; and e) adversely affects Water Authority's ratepayers.