
Meeting Date: December 13, 2023
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: C-23-22 – 2024 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 2024 Session.

1. 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 as a drought reserve. ASR is a vital part of Water 2120, the Water Authority's 100-year water resources management strategy. This request would fund planning, design, and permitting for the next phase of the direct injection project.

2. Thomas Wells Arsenic Treatment Plant - \$4.3 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. The proposed project will improve system resiliency and drought preparedness.

3. 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.

4. Carnuel Water Improvements Project - \$2 Million

The Water Authority has been assisting Carnuel for more than a decade to address the community's need for a safe and reliable drinking water supply. The initial construction phase linked Carnuel to the Water Authority's drinking water system, but several additional phases are required to complete the extension of water service community wide. Funding for planning and construction is needed to provide safe drinking water to this community.

5. Carnuel Wastewater Improvements Project - \$2.5 Million

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. Funding is needed for the next phase, which is south of I-40 around Coyote Springs.

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. 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.