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July 19, 2021

Representative Patricia A. Lundstrom
Chair, State of New Mexico House Appropriations and Finance Committee
325 Don Gaspar, Suite 101
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Subject: Support of the Budget Request by State Entities Responsible for Protection of Water Resources and the Environment for Fiscal Year 2023

Dear Chair Lundstrom:

On behalf of the Water Protection Advisory Board (WPAB), I am writing to add the voice of WPAB to that of many others in support of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 request from State Entities responsible for the protection of water resources and the environment including, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED); Office of the Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT); Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD); Interstate Stream Commission (ISC); and Office of the State Engineer (OSE) (collectively “State Entities”).

The WPAB was established as an interagency advisory board to oversee protection of water quality in Bernalillo County and in the Albuquerque, NM greater metropolitan area through joint ordinances passed by three local jurisdictions. The WPAB is made up of citizen advisors appointed by the Albuquerque City Council (City), Bernalillo County Board of County Commissioners (County), and the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Water Authority) Governing Board. The purpose of the WPAB is to advise those entities of concerns and make recommendations regarding protection of both groundwater and surface water resources.

WPAB directives, as outlined in the joint ordinances founding the Board, include advocating for effective protection of surface and groundwater quality and studying surface and groundwater protection concerns in order to advise the City, County, and Water Authority. To accomplish those directives, we solicit regular updates from State Entities on water-related topics such as the status of remediation of contamination sites within the City and County. For instance, there are more than 20 groundwater contamination sites in the City and County. These sites are in varying stages of cleanup under NMED oversight. Based on presentations we have heard from the State Entities, such as NMED, it is clear that they need all of their current funding, and more, in order to successfully fulfill their missions and protect public health.

WPAB respectfully requests that the aforementioned State Entities have their budgets approved at the highest level possible for FY23 in order to effectively protect the State's water resources. Approval of the increase to the State Entities' budgets will have a beneficial impact on their ability to protect water resources in New Mexico, and will result in improved protection of drinking water sources for citizens in the WPAB area of concern.

Respectfully,

J. Steven Glass, Chair
Water Protection Advisory Board

Cc: Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
Cabinet Secretary, James Kenney, New Mexico Environment Department
John D'Antonio P.E., New Mexico State Engineer
Cabinet Secretary, Sarah Cottrell Propst, New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department
Maggie Hart-Stebbins, Office of the Natural Resources Trustee
Director, Rolf Schmidt-Peterson, Interstate Stream Commission
Senate Finance Committee Chair George K. Muñoz, District-4
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Representative T. Ryan Lane, District-3
Representative Raymundo Lara, District-34
Representative Debra M. Sariñana, District-21
Representative Candie G. Sweetser, District-32
Representative Christine Trujillo, District-25
David Abbey, Director of Legislative Finance Committee
Caitlyn Wan, Legislative Finance Committee Analyst
Andrew Miner, Department of Finance and Administration Analyst