
Meeting Date: December 2, 2015
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: C-15-32 – 2016 Federal Legislative Priorities

ACTION: Recommend Approval

SUMMARY:

The 2016 Federal Legislative Priorities for the Water Authority are summarized below. The Legislative Priorities are consistent with the prior year requests with modifications to reflect funding and updated status reports.

Funding Request

1. Water Reclamation and Recycling Program

The Water Authority is seeking funding to expand the existing reuse and reclamation program as part of the Water Resources Management Strategy. The Tijeras Reuse project in the southeast portion of the service area and the Bosque Reuse project on the west side are two projects that we are requesting funding and are described as follows:

- A. Tijeras Reuse Project. The Water Authority has been evaluating reuse and recycling opportunities on the southeast portion of the Water Authority's service area that would provide non-potable reuse water for irrigation and industrial uses in that area. The facility will be located near the Tijeras Arroyo and would treat domestic wastewater from Albuquerque's eastside to high reuse or potentially potable drinking water standards that could then be reused or reclaimed for use by Sandia, Kirtland and other irrigation and industrial uses in the southeast heights of Albuquerque.
- B. Bosque Reuse Project. The Water Authority has 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. The project includes a new wastewater recycling plant just north of the Bosque Prep High School south of Montano Road. Municipal effluent will be treated and piped to various sites on the west side during the summer months and discharged to the Rio Grande to assist in keeping the Albuquerque stretch of the river wet for endangered species habitat during the winter months. The facility could treat up to 15 million gallons a day for reuse, aquifer storage and recovery and discharge to the river.

2. Support FY15 and FY16 Appropriations for Kirtland AFB's Bulk Fuel Facility Spill Corrective Action

The Water Authority supports any efforts by the U.S. Air Force to allocate funding for continued investigation, interim measures, and remediation activities at the KAFB Bulk Fuel Facility Spill site, being performed by KAFB to come into conformance to their RCRA permit.

The Water Authority expects continued participation as a consulted stakeholder in the decision making process for interim measures and other corrective action activities to ensure the safety and security of the aquifer and drinking water supply for the citizens of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County remains safe and secure. The Water Authority supports an aggressive remediation strategy, including cleanup of the subsurface soil, the fuel product on the water table and the dissolved phase plume, in order to return the aquifer back to "pre-spill" conditions. The Water Authority supports the course of action being taken by the U.S. Air Force, which includes extracting and "collapsing" the downgradient dissolved phase ethylene dibromide plume in 2015, which started in the summer of 2016 and will continue for another 10 to 20 years.

3. Support FY15 and FY16 Appropriations for the Sandia National Laboratory's Environmental Restoration Activities and the Mixed Waste Landfill

The Water Authority maintains a status of groundwater protection and monitoring activities at the lab's former operational areas, including the Mixed Waste Landfill, which is one of the solid waste management units covered under SNL's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit. The Water Authority wants to ensure that sufficient funding for long-term monitoring and maintenance of the mixed Waste Landfill is secured by the DOE-NNSA, and that regular status reports are provided to the Water Authority Governing Board on an annual basis.

Status Reports

1. Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program

The ESA Workgroup has been actively engaged for many years and is still undergoing changes as the federal, state and local agencies are working on a new Biological Assessment and Biological Opinion (BO). The schedule for completion of a new BO is unknown at this time and operations in the Middle Rio Grande will continue under the 2013 BO. The Recovery Implementation Program (RIP) discussions are still ongoing, but it is not clear on how the new BO and RIP will work together.

2. San Juan-Chama and Native Storage in Abiquiu

The Water Authority believes that native water storage in Abiquiu for the Water Authority and the other water entities in the basin are critically important for the future success of Rio Grande Compact Compliance and ESA Collaborative Program. The Water Authority is diligently working towards obtaining the necessary permits and permanent easements and will be requesting a modification to our existing storage contract. Upon completion of easement acquisition, the Water Authority will be requesting a permit from the State Engineer and working towards environmental compliance with the Corps for native water storage in Abiquiu reservoir.