
Meeting Date: December 4, 2018
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: C-18-45 – 2019 Federal Legislative Priorities

ACTION: Recommend Approval

SUMMARY:

The 2019 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

Under Policy B of the water resources plan (Water 2120: Securing our Water Future), the Water Authority should utilize all excess wastewater effluent as part of a reuse and recycling plan which includes aquifer storage and recovery. 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 in the amount of \$1.5 million for NEPA and other required permitting activities for the following projects:

- A. Tijeras Reuse Project. The Water Authority would like to thank KAFB for providing the needed 60-acre site for the construction and operation of the Tijeras Non-potable Water Reclamation Plant. The facility will be located near the Tijeras Arroyo on KAFB property and would treat domestic wastewater from the Tijeras interceptor 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. The Tijeras interceptor conveys about 10 million gallons per day of effluent to the Southside Water Reclamation Plant.

- B. Bosque Reuse Project. The Water Authority has secured the land for the construction and operation of the new wastewater treatment plant and has also 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. 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. Construction of the first phase of the facility is underway and consists of grading and drainage, site security and other improvements.

2. Support Annual 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, risk assessment, 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 and active remediation strategy, including cleanup of the source area (including both soil and fuel floating or submerged) and the dissolved-phase contamination plume, in order to return the aquifer back to “pre-spill” conditions.

3. Support FY18 and FY19 Appropriations for the Sandia National Laboratory’s Environmental Restoration Activities and the Mixed Waste Landfill and other groundwater contamination sites

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 Sandia National Labs’ (SNL) 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.

In addition, the Water Authority supports the funding for interim measure activities at other groundwater contamination sites on the SNL, including, but not limited to the Tijeras Arroyo Contamination Site, the Burn Site, and the Technical Area – V Groundwater Area of Concern.

Legislative Request

4. San Juan-Chama and Native Storage in Abiquiu Reservoir (Policy I-1, Water 2120: Securing our Water Future)

The policy of the Water Authority Board is to complete the necessary permitting to store native water in Abiquiu including other water entities in the basin. Storage of native water is critically important for the future success for both 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. The Water Authority will be submitting a State Engineer’s application for native water storage in the near future.

The Water Authority, working closely with the Army Corps of Engineers, has developed language for reauthorization of storage of native and San Juan-Chama water in Abiquiu. The language was not included in the 2018 WRDA bill, however, the Bureau of Reclamation is seeking funding to complete dam safety improvements at El Vado which would require that native water be stored in Abiquiu for at least 2 years. We are working with both the Corps and Reclamation to seek an alternative bill for reauthorization.

Status Reports

1. Water Operations and the Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program

A new Biological Opinion was issued for water operations in the Middle Rio Grande in December 2016 to provide ongoing ESA coverage for the State of NM, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and the Bureau of Reclamation. The long-standing ESA Collaborative Program which has been active for many years will need to transition to address how the new BO addresses compliance and what roles entities will be playing in the future. The policy of the Water Authority Board (Policy J-1) is to continue to participate in the ESA Collaborative Program and develop a RIP for the long-term success of the endangered species. During irrigation season 2018, the Water Authority working with Reclamation secured additional water to keep the Albuquerque reach of the Rio Grande wet during August, September and October 2018. This was a key partnership to ensure compliance with the new BO and was supported by the NM Interstate Stream Commission

FISCAL IMPACT:

None