
Meeting Date: December 4, 2019
Staff Contact: Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director

TITLE: C-19-38 – 2020 State Legislative Priorities

ACTION: Recommend Approval

SUMMARY:

The Water Authority has ten recommended State Legislative Priorities for 2020 Session.

1. Bosque Non-potable Water Reclamation Plant and Reuse System – \$1.5 Million

Consistent with Water 2120, this project extends the utility's water resources through conservation and direct and indirect potable reuse. The Bosque project would provide non-potable water for industrial purposes and irrigation needs to parks, schools, and golf courses. 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. 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. The facility is planned as part of the Water Authority's 100-year water plan 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 be discharged 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 first phase of the project is to complete the conceptual design and start the permitting process including submitting a new permit to EPA for discharge to the Rio Grande. The second phase is to complete the preliminary and final design. The last phase would be the construction of the facility and that could be completed in smaller phases consistent with extension of the pipelines to the irrigation sites.

2. Tijeras Reuse Project – \$1.0 Million

Consistent with Water 2120, this project extends the utility's water resources through conservation and direct and indirect potable reuse. The Water Authority would like to thank KAFB for providing the needed 24-acre site for the construction and operation of the Tijeras non-potable Water Reclamation Plant. 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

eastside of Albuquerque to provide additional non-potable water for irrigation and aquifer storage and recovery (drinking water source). The facility is planned as part of the Water Authority's 100-year water plan 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 sites and to discharge into the Tijeras arroyo as part of a comprehensive aquifer storage and recovery program. In the winter when water demands are lower, the purified effluent will be discharged to the Tijeras Arroyo and will be allowed to infiltrate into the aquifer for future use.

The first phase of the Tijeras Reuse project is to complete the conceptual design and start the permitting process including submitting an ASR permit to the State Engineer and a new permit from EPA to discharge into the Tijeras arroyo. The second phase is to complete the preliminary and final design with the last phase to be construction of the new plant and associated pipelines.

3. Aquifer Storage and Recovery – \$1.0 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 the Water Authority's 100-year Water Plan (Water 2120). This request would fund permitting and design for the next phase of the direct injection or an infiltration project on the eastside of Albuquerque.

4. Water Interactive Exhibit at Explora – \$500,000

The Water Interactive Exhibit would be constructed at Explora's new "X Studio" and Outdoor Learning Center for educating all levels of students on the importance of water and sustainability. Explora is developing the "X Studio" to be a STEAM education and workforce development center, connecting local teens and young adults with STEAM professionals, employers, and intensive study and work experiences. Part of the exhibit will focus on careers in the water industry. Explora will also be creating opportunities for Water Authority staff to meet directly with students at Explora offering mentorship opportunities and providing students with first-hand knowledge on careers in the water industry. The Water Authority has committed \$500,000 towards design and construction of water-education exhibits and the requested capital outlay funding would bring the total contribution to \$1,000,000, significantly increasing the scope of the exhibit.

5. Carnuel Wastewater Improvements Project – Planning/Design – \$2.5 Million

The Water Authority completed a design analysis report (DAR) in 2019, which provided three different alternatives for expanding sanitary sewer in the 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. This project will replace aging, leaking septic systems, by connecting these 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.

6. Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Implementation – \$5 Million

This funding request will complete the conservation of aging meters with smart meters. To date approximately 100,000 water meters, or 50 percent, of all water meters in the Water Authority system have been converted to AMI. Benefits of AMI water meter conversion include improved water efficiency, water conservation, billing accuracy, and customer service. Customer service is enhanced by providing access for real-time water consumption information on an hour-by-hour basis. AMI water usage data can be accessed by customers online allowing customers to make informed decisions on efficient water use. AMI meters are monitored remotely, which reduces vehicle traffic from manual meter reading, reduces carbon emissions, and improves public safety by removing vehicles from the road.

7. AMI Pressure Metering Project – \$100,000

This funding request includes the installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) pressure monitoring devices in designated areas within distribution to provide real-time pressure monitoring data, helping operations staff optimize water pressure in the distribution system and meet customer service levels. The Water Authority conducted a pilot study in 2019 that identified several areas of improvement and would use this funding to expand this pressure optimization effort to other areas within the water system.

8. Acequia Education Partnership – \$50,000

In partnership with the acequias in Bernalillo County, \$50,000 would be used to initiate a planning and education pilot program which would focus on preserving the legacy of acequia history, cultural practices, and record management. Consistent with Policy J of Water 2120, this partnership program would help protect environmental and cultural resources in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.

9. Review of Governmental Gross Receipts Tax

Support a review of the contribution of Governmental Gross Receipts Taxes to the New Mexico Finance Authority and the allocation of resources for projects, which provided for interconnection of disadvantaged systems, public health and safety and water conservation and reuse projects. The Water Authority is the largest contributor of Governmental Gross Receipts Taxes and receives very little return on this contribution in terms of funded projects. The region has many unfunded interconnection projects of disadvantaged systems, which could use funding and is often not supported by NMFA. Additionally, there are many unfunded conservation and reuse projects which required funding to advance. It would be helpful if the GGRT allocation to NMFA could be reduced and allow these projects to go forward.

10. 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; e) adversely affects Water Authority's ratepayers.