

RESOLUTION R-21-18

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING NM HOUSE BILL 200, WHICH WOULD SPEED FUNDING OF WATER PROJECTS IN SOUTHWEST NEW MEXICO, AND URGING THE INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION TO FUND TECHNICAL AND PLANNING SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ENTITIES TO APPLY FOR NM UNIT FUND MONIES

WHEREAS, the Arizona Water Settlements Act of 2004 provided New Mexico with over \$90 million that may be used for “water utilization alternatives to meet water supply demands” in Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna counties; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Unit Fund that holds these funds is now valued at over \$80 million, after adding interest and investment gains and subtracting expenditures; and

WHEREAS, local governments and other entities in the four-county region have included water projects valued at over \$130 million in their most recent Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plans; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico CAP Entity was created in 2015 to design, build, and operate one or more structures to divert water from the Gila and San Francisco Rivers, which are collectively known as the “New Mexico Unit”; and

WHEREAS, nearly \$15 million from the New Mexico Unit Fund has been spent in pursuit of a New Mexico Unit; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico forfeited access to additional federal funds to assist with the construction of the New Mexico Unit when it failed to obtain a Record of Decision (ROD) from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior by the end of 2019; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation found that none of the proposed alternatives for a New Mexico Unit would be economically feasible without additional sources of funding that had not yet been identified; and

WHEREAS, if the construction of a New Mexico Unit was economically infeasible when federal construction funds were available, it is even further from economic feasibility now that no construction funding is available; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico CAP Entity maintains as a priority the construction and operation of a New Mexico Unit, the continued pursuit of which would further reduce the amount of funding available for other water projects in southwest New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, several members of the New Mexico CAP Entity represent organizations that are likely to compete for funding from the NM Unit Fund,

WHEREAS, communities across the four-county region face significant challenges to the sustainability of their water supplies, such as those currently facing the towns of Hurley and Hanover in Grant County;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Grant County hereby finds that it would be inappropriate for the Interstate Stream Commission to consult with the New Mexico CAP Entity on the question of which water projects should receive funding from the NM Unit Fund; and

DECLARES its support of House Bill 200, introduced in the current session of the New Mexico Legislature by State Senator Siah Correa Hemphill and three other legislators with the goal of ending funding for the development of a New Mexico Unit and speeding the funding of priority water projects in the four-county region; and

URGES the Interstate Stream Commission to assist in these goals by using monies in the NM Unit Fund to provide technical and planning support to local governments and other entities in the four-county region, either directly or through the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments.

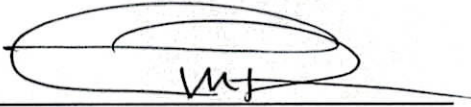
REQUESTS, the Water Trust Board adopt a process for evaluating proposals from the Southwest Water Planning Region that simplifies the application process and ensures an equitable distribution of funding among the region's four counties and across the many types of water users in the region, which range from counties and municipalities to volunteer-run irrigation and water associations; and

REQUESTS, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham consider appointing qualified candidates from the Southwest Water Planning Region when making appointments to the Water Trust Board;

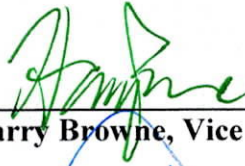
PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 11th day of March, 2021 in Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico.

[Signature Page Follows]

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS GRANT COUNTY, NEW MEXICO:

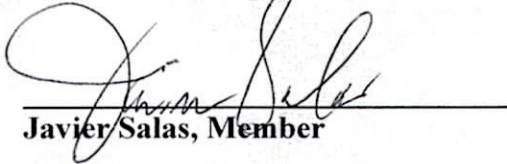


Chris M. Ponce, Chairman



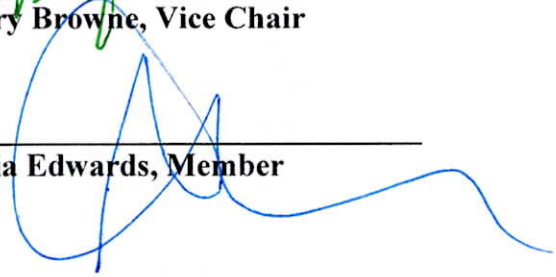
Harry Browne, Vice Chair

Gerald W Billings Jr., Member



Javier Salas, Member

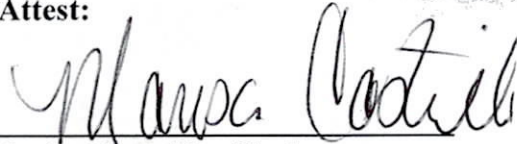
Alicia Edwards, Member



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Attest:



Marisa Castrillo, Clerk