

Governor Bill Richardson, Senator Pete Domenici Announce
\$6 Million to Fund Critical Water Projects in Northern NM

For Immediate Release
July 16, 2003

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ESPANOLA- Governor Bill Richardson today announced he has allocated \$6 Million to fund two critically needed community water projects in northern New Mexico. Governor Richardson made the announcement at a town hall meeting in Espanola this morning, and was joined via speakerphone from Washington, D.C. by U.S. Senator Pete Domenici. Senator Domenici worked closely with Governor Richardson to direct the money to areas with the most critical need.

The money will help the city of Espanola and the Village of Chimayo plan and build critical water system infrastructure.

“We're taking aggressive steps to help relieve the serious water situation that exists here in Northern New Mexico,” said Governor Richardson. “These projects will go a long way toward reducing dependence on wells drying up as groundwater resources dwindle, and will help provide safe, reliable drinking water for Espanola, Chimayo, and ultimately, this entire region.”

Espanola is in stage-three drought management status, and in the past has imposed a moratorium on building because of this severity of the situation. The city will receive \$4 million for diversion equipment and a filtration plant to allow the city to begin using the 1,000 acre feet per year of Rio Grande River Water to supplement, and eventually replace scarce or contaminated groundwater. The City has a multi-year lease on the river water, which is part of the San Juan-Chama Diversion Project.

Chimayo will receive \$2 Million for pumping stations and water lines to connect the village to the Espanola water system. Currently Chimayo has no existing public facilities supporting water supply, distribution, storage, or fire protection.

“Water is critical not only to everyday life, but for economic development and growth as well,” said Governor Richardson. We cannot build a prosperous New Mexico economy, and attract high wage jobs without safe, reliable supplies of water and efficient regional delivery systems.”

The funding is part of the Tax Relief legislation passed by Congress earlier this year, which gave New Mexico 62-million dollars in direct aid. The state recently received the first half of the amount, the balance will be paid in October.