

Governor Bill Richardson Allocates Funding for Critical Water Projects in Rio Rancho, South Valley, Bosque Farms, And Socorro- Takes Action to Resolve Water Rights Disputes

For Immediate Release
July 22, 2003

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SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today announced he has allocated more than \$2.6 million for urgently needed water projects in Rio Rancho, Bosque Farms, and Socorro. The Governor also announced he will direct an additional \$479,000 to the state court system and Office of the State Engineer to streamline and expedite handling of water rights cases.

“There is no issue more critical to our state than water,” said Governor Richardson. “My priority is to ensure every New Mexico community has an adequate, reliable, and high-quality supply of water now, and into the future. That’s why I’m taking action on these projects, and why I’m determined to make sure New Mexico is a leader in water conservation, re-use, and recycling. We have to prepare for the future now.”

Here is a list of funding and projects announced by Governor Richardson today:

RIO RANCHO: \$750,000

\$750,000 will be allocated for pilot projects focused on filtration systems for reclaimed wastewater that can be used for irrigation, commercial, or industrial use. Intel Corporation has offered its assistance to help evaluate the possible industrial use of reclaimed water. Sandia National Laboratories will also work with Rio Rancho on new water resource technologies. The funding will also support other pilot projects that evaluate methods to safely recharge aquifers. The city will use the allocation to secure matching federal funds to complete the projects.

BOSQUE FARMS: \$465,000

\$465,000 will be allocated for improvements and upgrades to the Village’s wastewater system that serves 5,500 residents. Bosque Farms Officials hope the funding will trigger up to \$2 million in federal grants to finish the work.

SOUTH VALLEY: \$750,000

\$750,000 will fund the continuation of the South Valley wastewater project, a joint effort between the city of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. This money will be used to extend lines to residents currently using aging septic systems.

SOCORRO: \$612,000

\$612,000 will be allocated for a new city well and improvements to the city's water system, providing additional storage facilities and reinforcing fire protection.

STATE "WATER COURTS": \$479,000

\$479,000 will be allocated to assist state courts and the Office of the State Engineer in resolving disputes and settling water rights issues throughout New Mexico. There is currently a 600-year backlog of water rights cases in New Mexico. These funds will go to streamline and simplify the process, and create a statewide water rights public education and instruction campaign.