



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Announces Final Approval for Albuquerque Water Project

*City has OK to proceed with using San Juan/Chama Project water for
drinking supply*

SANTA FE -Governor Bill Richardson today announced the state has granted the City of Albuquerque's application to divert surface water from the Rio Grande. State Engineer John D'Antonio gave final approval for the city's permit, clearing the way for metropolitan Albuquerque to secure its water future for 50 years into the future.

"This project fits directly addresses my top priority for the State of New Mexico-ensuring citizens have an adequate supply of safe, clean drinking water for years into the future," said Governor Richardson. "I applaud city leaders, particularly Mayor Martin Chavez and the City Council, for having had the foresight to secure the San Juan-Chama Diversion Project water supply and for approving a project to put it to use."

Albuquerque water users have been paying the city's portion of the project in advance with rate increases each year for the past several years.

Last week, the New Mexico Finance Authority approved more than \$128 million for the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority for first phase construction of the drinking water project.

The permit allows the city to divert and fully consume approximately 46,000 acre-feet (approximately 15 billion gallons) of San Juan-Chama Project water (water diverted under the Continental Divide from the San Juan River into the Rio Grande watershed) annually. The city may divert up to an equal amount of Rio Grande surface water provided that it returns the full amount of the additional diversion to the Rio Grande.

“This permit will not only help decrease the strain on Albuquerque’s underground aquifer, but will provide clean, safe drinking water for city residents,” said John D’Antonio, State Engineer. “It also will allow the city to fully use its San Juan-Chama water, while protecting existing water rights.”

D’Antonio said the permit is subject to certain conditions to protect existing water rights, minimize depletion of streamflow in the channel of the Rio Grande, and enhance the conservation of water within the city service area.

“State Engineer D’Antonio has set reasonable, responsible conditions on this permit, allowing Albuquerque to make full beneficial use of its water, while also promoting conservation and protecting the environment of the Rio Grande.”

The conditions include:

- Maintenance of an amount of San Juan-Chama Project water in storage sufficient to offset effects on the Rio Grande from past and ongoing groundwater diversions.
- Reduction of average per capita water use
- Submission of water conservation progress reports.
- Suspension of diversion of native Rio Grande surface water when native flow immediately above or immediately below the point of diversion is 130 cubic feet per second or less.
- Measuring, monitoring and reporting requirements.