



Governor Bill Richardson Announces New Mexico Finance Authority Board Approves Financing For More Than \$200 Million in Critical Water & Community Projects

Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority gets \$128 Million for San Juan/Chama Diversion Project

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RIO RANCHO- Governor Bill Richardson announced today that the New Mexico Finance Authority Board (NMFA) has approved more than \$200 million in loan financing and grants for important community projects across the state, including funding for water systems, public school facilities, and other construction projects.

“These projects will immediately help communities around the state, particularly rural communities, help themselves,” said Governor Richardson. “The largest portion of financing will pay for critical water projects to help communities across the state secure adequate supplies of safe, clean drinking water for residents well into the future. I believe there is no bigger priority for New Mexico, and I’m glad the NMFA agrees.”

The NMFA approved the financing for the projects during its regular meeting, held today in Rio Rancho.

“The projects the NMFA approved today will directly benefit the economic stability and quality of life for people across the state,” said Steve Flance, Chairman of the New Mexico Finance Authority. “The majority of water projects approved for loan financing are *regional* projects, and I applaud everyone involved for embracing the Governor’s goal of communities working together to solve New Mexico’s long term water needs.”

The largest loan amount approved today by the NMFA totals \$128 million to the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority for the construction of the San Juan/Chama Diversion Project. This project will allow Albuquerque and Bernalillo

County to begin using water rights acquired to access San Juan/Chama water to provide drinking water, reducing the rapid depletion of the area's aquifers.

NMFA Executive Director Bill Sisneros announced that other projects approved today for loan financing include:

- \$5.7 million for improvements to the Albuquerque Convention Center
- \$10.8 million for critical improvements to the Miners' Colfax Regional Medical Center in Raton,
- \$11.5 million for upgrades to the Jicarilla Apache Utility water system, the first ever NMFA loan to a Pueblo or Tribe,
- \$6.5 million for the Alamogordo regional water project desalination facility,
- \$5 million for the Espanola Municipal Schools Building Project,
- \$8 million for Gadsden Independent School District Building Projects,
- \$5.5 million for State Fair/Expo New Mexico improvements to the fairgrounds,

A total of more than \$1 million was approved to finance urgently needed fire engines and firefighting equipment for the the Philmont Fire District #1 and French Tract District #5 in Colfax County, for the El Cerro and Tome-Adelino Volunteer Fire Departments in Valencia County, and for the village of Grady in Curry County.

The NMFA also approved nearly \$3.9 million in grants for water and wastewater systems:

- \$400,000 for the Hanover Mutual Domestic Water Association emergency water project to connect the community to the Town of Bayard, since the Hanover community wells have run dry,
- \$400,000 to the community of Cordova for wastewater treatment. Cordova currently has raw sewage leaking onto community streets,
- \$400,000 for the Greater Chimayo regional water system, which includes portions of Santa Fe and Rio Arriba counties,
- \$400,000 to the Pueblo of Acoma for upgrades to its wastewater treatment plant,
- \$400,000 to El Valle de los Ranchos de Taos for the connection of sewer lines to the town of Taos, removing residents from septic systems,
- \$399,996 for the city of Las Vegas for an effluent reuse (conservation) project, and
- \$361,000 for an emergency wastewater project for the town of Springer.

The New Mexico Finance Authority was created by the New Mexico Legislature, and began operations in 1996.