



## State of New Mexico

*Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

For Immediate Release  
Nov. 17, 2004

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### **Governor Bill Richardson says water rights settlement bill will mean at least \$66 million for New Mexico projects**

SANTA FE -- Governor Bill Richardson today applauded the passage of a bill in Congress that will result in a minimum of \$66 million for water development in southwestern New Mexico. The bill, the Arizona Water Rights Settlement Bill, now heads to the White House for the President's approval.

"Passage of this bill clears the way for development of new water resources for communities in southwestern New Mexico in a manner similar to how the San Juan Chama Project of the 1960s made new water supplies available to communities along the Rio Grande," Governor Bill Richardson said.

"Our goal in negotiating this agreement was to preserve New Mexico's options, not to dictate New Mexico's future on the Gila River. This bill means New Mexico will make all decisions about its water in this region."

Congress in the Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968, provided that New Mexico could divert up to 18,000 additional acre feet of water from the Gila River in New Mexico, to be replaced by CAP water in Arizona in an exchange with an Arizona entity with Gila River water rights.

The 1968 Act also provided that New Mexico would be entitled to funding to develop water resources in the Gila Basin. The legislation provides that New Mexico would

receive \$66 million with no strings attached - to be spent on anything from watershed restoration to water development. If the decision is made to build a project, the total funding would increase to \$100 million - or as high as \$128 million, depending upon investment experience with the funds. The funds would become available starting in 2014.

As part of the agreement, New Mexico agreed to reduce its maximum allowable diversion from 18,000 acre feet to 14,000 acre feet per year over a 10-year average. The maximum safe yield - that is, the amount of water that could be committed for delivery, would be 10,000 acre feet per year. While the agreement with Arizona sets maximum rates of diversion and yield, New Mexico is free to decide on lower levels of diversion and yield depending on environmental considerations.