



# State of New Mexico

*Office of the Governor*

Bill Richardson  
*Governor*

News Release

## **Governor Bill Richardson Announces Top Priorities for Water, Energy, and Natural Resources**

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SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today announced his legislative priorities regarding water resources, environmental protection, and outdoor recreation in New Mexico. Governor Richardson's agenda focuses on sustaining our water, promoting and developing clean energy, and expanding access to our great outdoors.

"My plan is a comprehensive package that will strengthen our economy, increase opportunities for hunting, fishing, and recreation, develop our renewable energy potential, and assure clean water for New Mexico's future," Governor Bill Richardson during a news conference today.

Governor Richardson is proposing the following initiatives:

### **Managing and Capitalizing on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency**

- Creation of a New Mexico Electric Transmission Authority. Its primary goal will be to move the state's renewable energy - especially wind and solar - to growing markets inside New Mexico and out of state. There is 6,000-12,000 megawatts of wind energy potential - more than triple New Mexico's current electricity consumption - that needs to get into the marketplace as soon as possible.
- New energy efficiency legislation which has been developed by a broad task force, including consumers, utilities, co-ops, and the Public Regulation Commission. The goal is ensure that it costs less to *save* energy than it does to *use* it.

- Creation of the “New Mexico Clean Energy Farm,” also known as “net metering,” which allows people and businesses to generate clean energy and send their excess production back onto the grid. It will make “distributed generation” a reality throughout New Mexico.
- An additional \$10 million investment in the Clean Energy Fund and the hydrogen economy of the future. These two programs offer great promise to push hydrogen, and other alternative energy from the lab into the marketplace.

### **Expanding Parks, Providing Recreation Access, Protecting Our Natural Resources**

- Support New Mexico’s hunters and wildlife community by increasing the budget for the Game and Fish Department, for salary increases and basic administrative support.
- Support the Game and Fish voluntary access program, so that the department can work with private landowners to increase access for hunters.
- Establish, by legislation, a program called Gaining Access Into Nature, or GAIN. The goal is to improve all aspects of wildlife appreciation in New Mexico, from hunting to fishing to wildlife viewing.
- \$5 million for land conservation to provide hunting and fishing access, protect wildlife habitat, help ranchers and farmers with land conservation and assist communities that want to protect open space and wildlife habitat.
- Continue efforts to create a world-class system of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails across New Mexico by investing \$1 million for the Continental Divide and Rio Grande Heritage trails, and \$3 million to extend the Bosque trails in Albuquerque north to Bernalillo and south to Belen.
- Creation of new state parks at Shakespeare Ghost Town and Red Rock in Gallup.

### **Environment- Protecting Our Air**

- Adopt tougher, more responsible air quality standards than those being proposed by the Bush Administration to control toxic mercury emissions, as well as stronger requirements to make sure New Mexico’s biggest air polluters don’t sneak through newly created federal loopholes.

### **Developing, Managing, and Conserving Water**

- Allocate \$90 million in critical water infrastructure projects as part of the Governor’s “Invest New Mexico” initiative.
- Legislation to give the State Engineer the authority to limit or deny domestic well permits in areas where the water supply is over-used. This over-use threatens supplies and the state’s ability to fulfill compact delivery requirements. This legislation will close a loophole in water law that needs to be plugged. Existing wells

are not affected by this legislation - except that their supply of water would be better protected if it were in the law.

- \$600,000 to New Mexico Tech to start an overdue aquifer mapping project to cover the entire state, as an important part of New Mexico's statewide water plan.
- Give the Interstate Stream Commission the authority to acquire water rights to form a strategic water reserve in streams where environmental or compact delivery requirements strain supplies. The Governor is proposing \$5 million to make this strategic water reserve a reality.

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