

Thank you for the important work this Committee and your staff do to improve and support water management and infrastructure across the United States. As we consider the 2022 Water Resources Development Act, much of the West is facing its worst drought in over 1,200 years. New Mexicans are deeply concerned about ensuring that our water infrastructure is up to the challenge of responding to this drought and increasing hydrologic change.

To this end, we are humbly requesting the inclusions of several community-driven and science-based proposals for inclusion in the 2022 Water Resources Development Act, which would greatly improve water infrastructure and management in New Mexico's First Congressional District.

Increase Funding Under the Section 593 Authorization and Include Water Reuse Projects

Section 593 funds were authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 to support environmental infrastructure projects in central New Mexico. These funds have been used to build important sections of the South Valley Water Utility Project, but funding has reached its authorization limit since it was last increased in 2005.

We request that the Committee consider authorizing an additional \$50 million for the Section 593 Program and include water reuse projects as an environmental infrastructure project eligible for assistance under Section 593(c).

Increasing the Section 593 authorization would help to fund drinking water, wastewater, water security, and stormwater projects throughout New Mexico's First District and across the state. This additional funding is estimated to cover all anticipated Section 593 project funding needs for the next decade.

The request is strongly supported throughout our district by numerous stakeholders, including the Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority, the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority, Bernalillo County, and Valencia County.

National Academy of Sciences Reservoir Operations Study in the Rio Grande Basin

The Upper Rio Grande River includes a complex system of dams, reservoirs, irrigation systems, flood control structures and other projects with individual authorizations for specific projects and purposes. The individual, sometimes conflicting, authorizations mean that the Rio Grande cannot be managed to optimize complimentary and competing demands on the system as a whole at the watershed level. Modernizing water management on the Rio Grande will require updating and optimizing the models and systems utilized to manage the watershed.

We request that the Committee include language in WRDA directing the Army Corps and other federal water management authorities operating projects in the Rio Grande to work together with the National Academy of Sciences to study system operations and management in the Rio Grande Basin and recommend management models, systems, and operational changes that can optimize water availability, storage, streamflow, and hazard mitigation, taking into account the impacts of a changing climate. This study will help water managers throughout the Rio Grande Basin improve management flexibility and water security. The National Academy of Sciences has already worked with key stakeholders, including the Corps and the Bureau of Reclamation on developing a memorandum of agreement for the study. The Bureau of Reclamation is expected to receive direction to participate in the

study in the FY 2022 Appropriations bill, and the requested language in WRDA would help to further advance this critical study.

Modern, flexible management of the Rio Grande River is critical to New Mexico's long-term water security in the face of climate change and crucial to sustaining our communities' cultures, traditions, and ways of life. I am currently drafting legislation that would provide authorities to increase operational flexibility on the Rio Grande. Having the best available science to guide our management models and systems is critical to ensuring that flexible management authorities can improve water security across the basin.

I am also drafting legislation to unleash the power of water data to improve real-time water management across the country, by improving federal water data availability, interoperability, and tools and partnerships with state, tribal, local and other entities. I request that this Committee consider prioritizing requests and projects that improve water data and tools and potentially include authorizing language to support this effort.

Updated Hydrologic Analysis Study for the Town of Estancia

The town of Estancia, New Mexico, is a rural, underserved community facing imminent threats of water shortages. Groundwater pumping has caused the Estancia Valley Fill aquifer to drop by as much as five feet annually in some locations. Agricultural production is at risk from drying wells and saline water migration. The town is in critical need of a water detention pond and a new water diversion structure. A hydrologic analysis was completed in 2001 by the Corps, but the town has been unable to request funding for these projects without an updated Hydrologic Analysis.

I urge the Committee to authorize \$100,000 for the Corps to update a hydrologic analysis for the town of Estancia. Updating this hydrologic analysis will help the town of Estancia build much-needed infrastructure to divert and preserve water, protect agricultural production, and reduce flood hazards.

Middle Rio Grande Flood Protection Cost Share

The Middle Rio Grande Flood Protection Bernalillo to Belen, New Mexico project was originally authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. The recommended plan, as outlined in the 2020 Chief's Report, would restore approximately 266 acres of riparian forest habitat and improve hydrologic connectivity between the Rio Grande and its floodplain by constructing high-flow channels, bank destabilization, berm removal, willow swales, and wetlands. It would also restore native habitat diversity through re-creation of historic habitat types that were lost to water management activities, creating new successional stages of existing habitat, exotic species reduction, and re-vegetation of native plant species. With a high cost to benefit ratio of 9.46, the recommended plan is a smart investment for taxpayers and important to the restoration of the watershed.

At the time of original authorization, flood control projects had a 25% non-federal cost share, under which the 3.2 mile Corrales Unit was completed. The Water Resources Development Act of 1996 increased the non-federal cost share to 35% but did not directly adjust the cost share of projects with prior authorization. The 2018 General Reevaluation Report and 2020 Chief's Report cited the Project's original authorization but used the increased non-federal cost share of 35% without any specific Congressional direction to increase the cost share for projects with prior authorization.

I request that the Committee direct the Corps to honor the original cost share authorization of 25% for the Middle Rio Grande Flood Protection Bernalillo to Belen, New Mexico project.

The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District is the non-federal cost share partner for this project. This project is located in two New Mexico counties where the per capita income is significantly below the national average: Bernalillo (\$29,195; 2019); and Valencia (\$21,740; 2019). The increased cost share moved this project further out of reach for a community that had been working to meet its cost share for a generation.

Pueblo Irrigation Infrastructure Improvement Project

The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 authorized \$4 million to the Bureau of Reclamation to study irrigation infrastructure for 18 federally-recognized Pueblos in New Mexico who rely on water from the Rio Grande Basin for cultural, agricultural, municipal, and ceremonial purposes. This study identified nearly \$280 million in irrigation improvements needed on Pueblo lands. **Should programs authorized by agencies other than the Army Corps be considered for inclusion in this WRDA bill, I urge the Committee to authorize an additional \$200 million for Reclamation's Pueblo Irrigation Infrastructure Improvement Project** to address the infrastructure needs of these projects, which are so vital to the economic, cultural, and environmental resilience of our Pueblo Tribal communities in the Rio Grande Basin.

Acequia Resiliency and Tribal Acequia Program

The Water Resources Development Act of 1986 authorized the Acequia Resiliency and Tribal Acequia Program in section 1113 for the restoration and preservation of acequia systems. Acequias are ancient water management systems that include irrigation works that are the backbone of agricultural and community life in New Mexico. Acequias have been communally managed and maintained by generations of communities. Increasingly, however, climate change is threatening New Mexico's proud tradition of acequias through inconsistent and variable water flows.

I request that the Committee authorize an additional \$27 million for the Acequia Resiliency and Tribal Acequia Program. This increase will allow for needed infrastructure improvements of river diversion structures, increased local capacity to manage and prevent invasions of plant species, and support research and development of management solutions for invasive aquatic plants.

Increase Tribal Partnership Program Authorization

The Water Resources Development Act of 2000 authorized the Tribal Partnership Program in Section 203 for increased cooperation between the Corps and Tribal nations to study and carry out projects that will substantially benefit Tribes. This program has supported numerous critically important flood control projects on Tribal lands in New Mexico and demand for the program by Tribes and Pueblos has grown with increasing awareness.

I request that the Committee authorize an additional \$5 million for the Tribal Partnership Program. This program is the only Corps authority that specifically directs partnerships with Tribes, including much-needed projects that may not otherwise receive vital funding. The program supports the Administration's commitment to Tribes and promoting environmental justice and equity, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

Thank you for considering these proposals. I look forward to working with you to ensure these items are included.