

Water Infrastructure & Drought Mitigation

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Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee

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New Mexico Office of the State Engineer & Interstate Stream Commission (OSE/ISC)



Economic and Rural Development requires water security

- **The 50-Year Water Action Plan ensures New Mexicans have clean water now and into the future so that our economies can continue to thrive**
- **OSE/ISC work creatively with other State, Federal, Tribal and local partners to ensure water needs are considered when identifying opportunities for growth:**
 - Conserve existing water resources
 - Develop new water resources
 - Protect water quality and watersheds
- **Water storage reservoirs, pipelines, wells, stormwater conveyance systems and maintaining river channel corridors are examples of infrastructure projects that must be developed and maintained to protect water supplies**

50-Year Water Action Plan Elements

Water Conservation

- **A1 Develop a water education program**
- **A2 Incentivize agricultural water conservation**
- **A3 Reduce leaks in drinking water infrastructure/ increase municipal conservation**
- **A4 Improve water storage and delivery systems**

New Water Supplies

- **B1 Develop treated brackish water - initial appropriation of \$40M**
- **B2 Adopt policies to expand potable and non-potable water reuse**
- **B3 Improve groundwater mapping and monitoring**

Water and Watershed Protection

- **C1 Clean up contaminated groundwater sites**
- **C2 Develop a surface water discharge permitting program**
- **C3 Modernize wastewater treatment plants and stormwater infrastructure**
- **C4 Protect and restore watersheds**

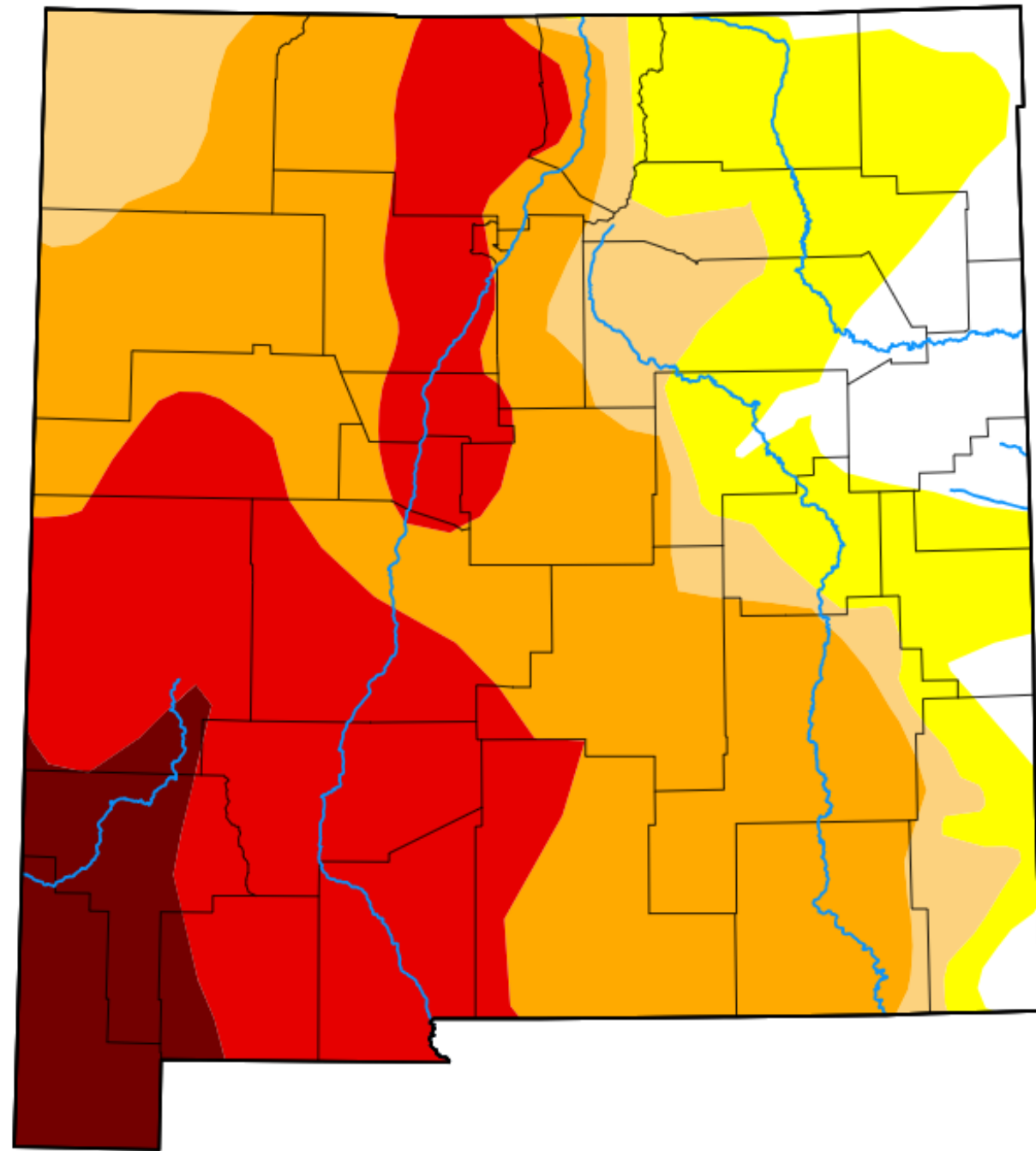
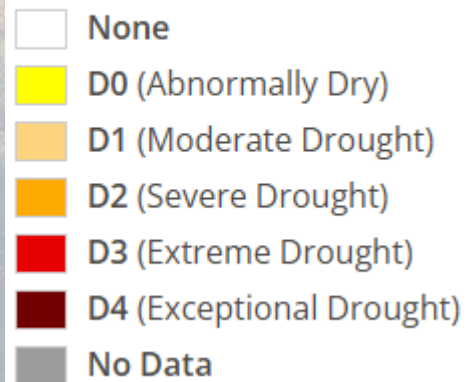
Drought Persists in New Mexico

- Governor's May 22 executive order on drought requires state agencies to coordinate drought relief efforts
- Trending toward a hotter, drier future with up to 25% less water
- Working with other agencies and local communities on emergency responses for fires, post-fire runoff/relief

US Drought Monitor

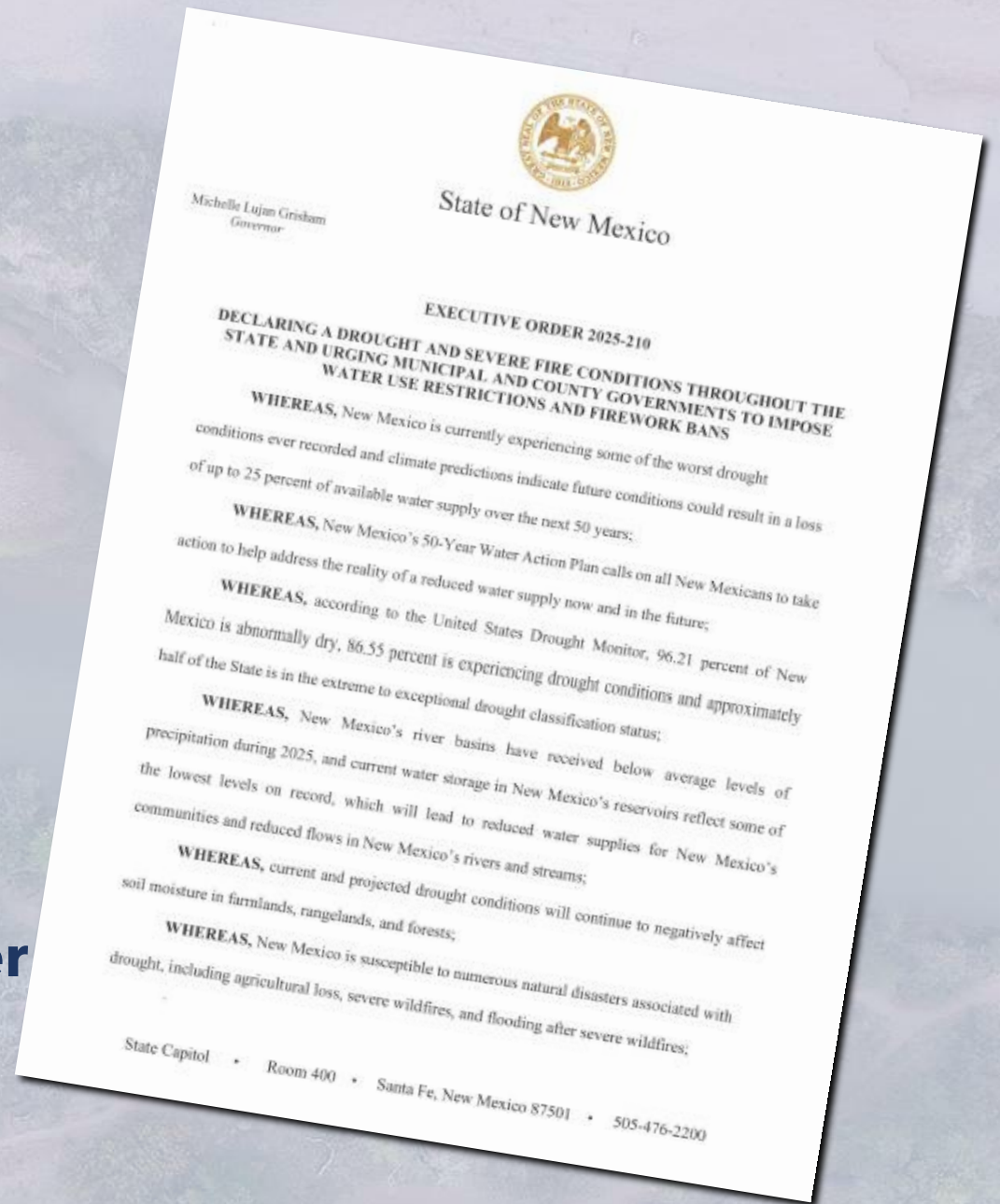
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Intensity



Governor's Executive Order

- **Executive Order 2025-210**
 - Issued May 22, 2025
 - Confirmed drought and wildfire risks
- **Drought Task Force**
 - Convened May 28, 2025
 - Meeting June 27 to review available drought response resources
 - **Goal to complement and support ongoing measures to manage water and address drought for our communities**



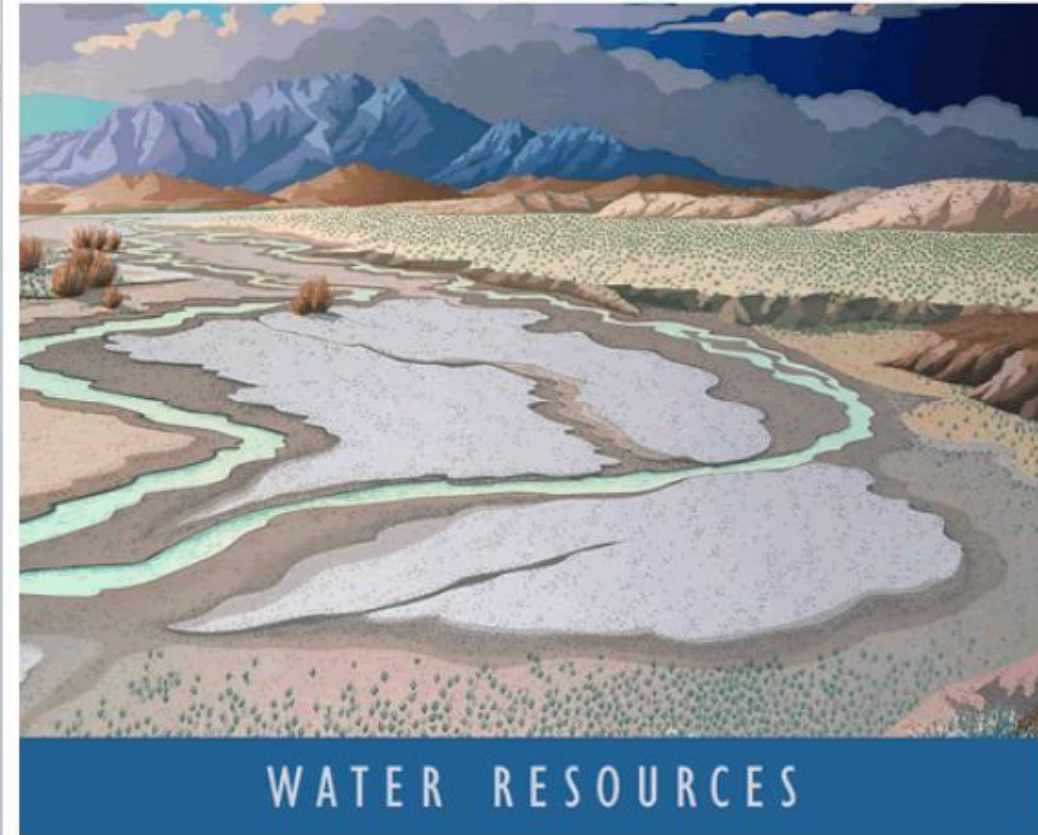
Current and future climate impacts to NM

- **Lower streamflow and recharge because of increased aridity**
- **Greater interannual variability in precipitation**
- **More extreme precipitation events**
- **Hotter, more severe droughts**
- **Decreasing snowpack → earlier and diminishing snowmelt runoff**
- **Greater demands on groundwater**
- **Vegetation stress**
- **Increasing catastrophic forest fires**
- **Increasing flooding and sedimentation in rivers**
- **Irreversible damage to soils through loss of vegetation and erosion**
- **Degraded quality of surface waters**

Climate Change in New Mexico Over the Next 50 Years: Impacts on Water Resources

Editors and Contributing Authors: Nelia W. Dunbar, David S. Gutzler, Kristin S. Pearthree, Fred M. Phillips, Paul W. Bauer

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Protecting our Water Future Protects All Aspects of our Lives

1. Modernize Water Management

Utilize 21st century management tools to provide significantly improved services for New Mexicans

2. Invest in the Rio Grande

Focus on holistic management of the Rio Grande Basin to address urgent challenges

3. Plan for our Water Future

Implement the Water Security Planning Act to develop regional water plans and secure water rights settlements for New Mexico's Pueblos, Tribes and Nations

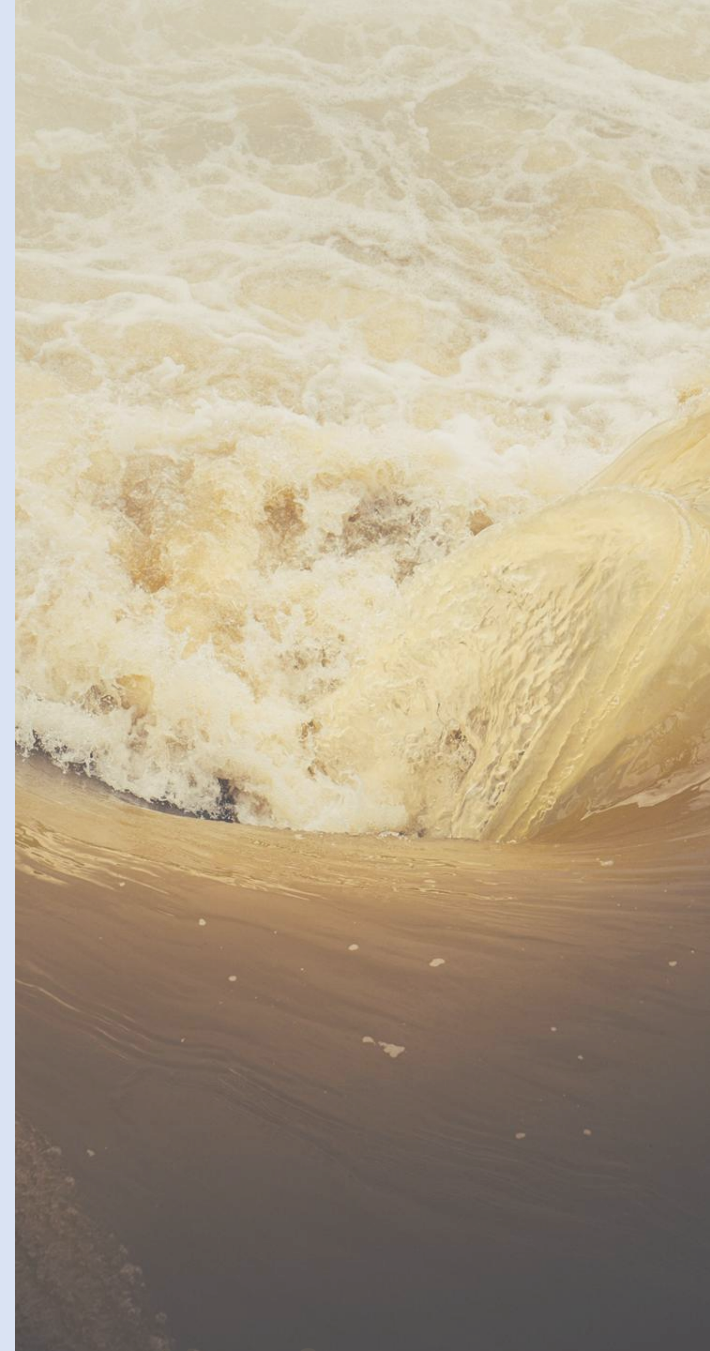


Modernize Water Management

- Retain and recruit critical staff and ensure competitive salaries.
- Implement 21st century technology – including IT staff; data management; hydrologic skills, models and tools; and updated data and permit interfaces on website
- Ensure water storage, conveyance and distribution infrastructure is maintained
- Develop current enforcement mechanisms

Invest in the Rio Grande

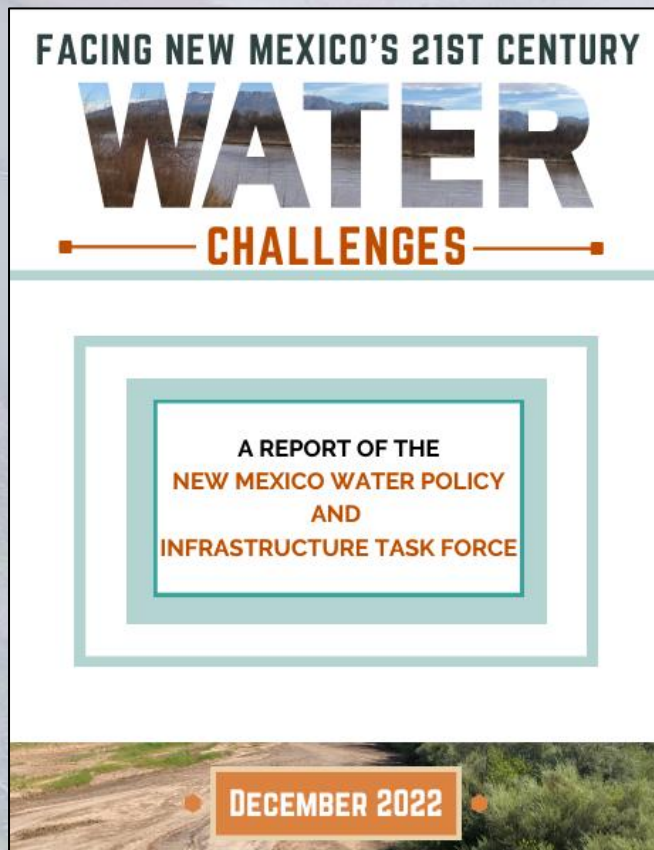
- Meet the existing legal requirements of the Rio Grande Compact and the new requirements outlined in the upcoming settlement in TX v NM settlement. The settlement resolves 12+ years of costly litigation and provides certainty for stakeholders in the Lower Rio Grande
- Keep water flowing to Elephant Butte Reservoir
- Expand measurement and metering





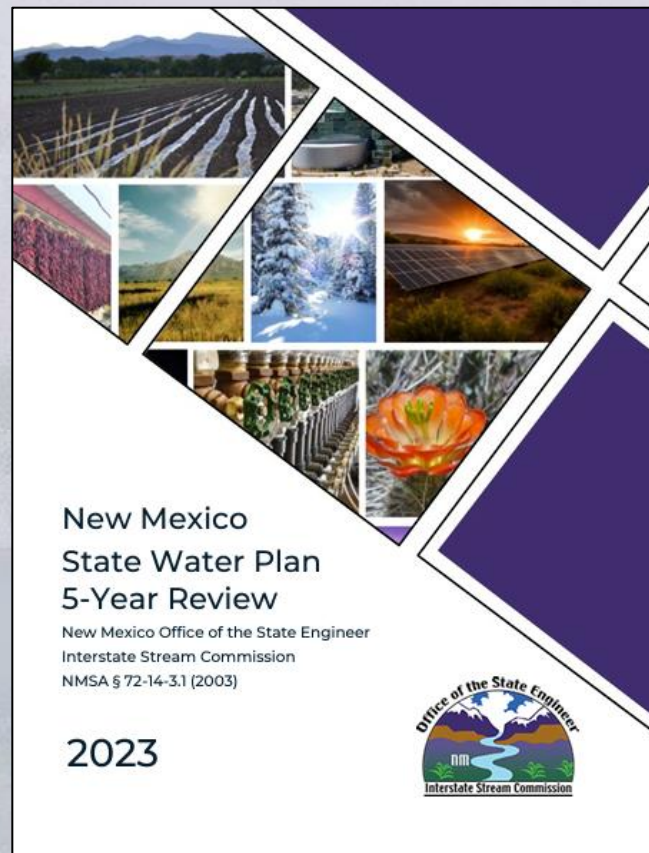
Plan for Our Water Future

- **Continue to implement and track progress on the Water Security Planning Act and the 50-Year Water Action Plan:**
 - Renew regional water planning efforts
 - Develop a water education campaign
 - Concentrate on water workforce development
 - Improve river conveyance systems for long term efficiency
- **Prioritize further progress on Indian Water Rights Settlements, including implementation of existing settlements and advancing additional settlements.**



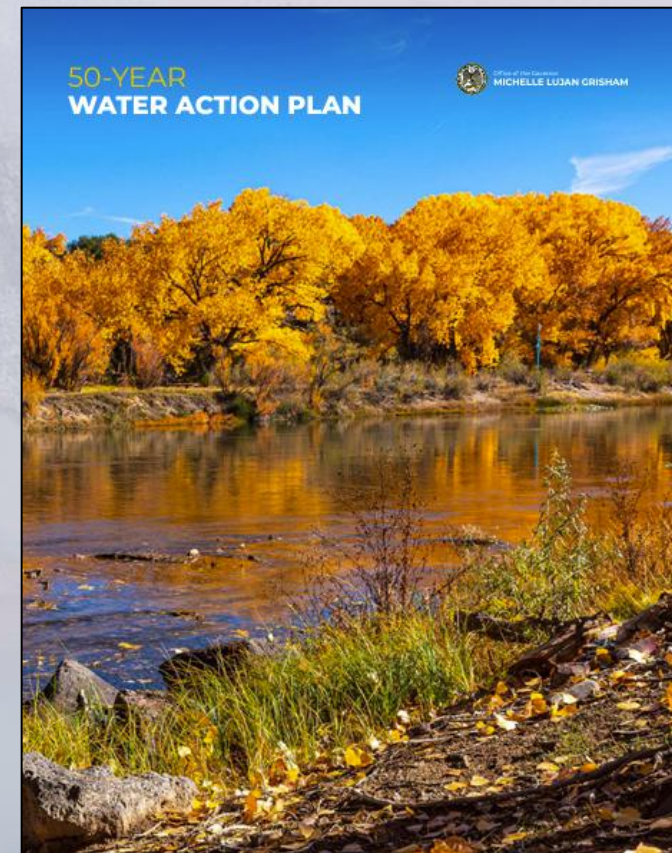
2022 Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force

- 17 Recommendations
- 106 strategies
- Multi-year phased implementation



2023 State Water Plan Review

- Provides updates since 2018 Plan
- Recommends investing in revitalized regional water planning



2024 Governor Lujan Grisham's 50-Year Water Action Plan

- Water conservation
- New water supplies
- Water and watershed protection

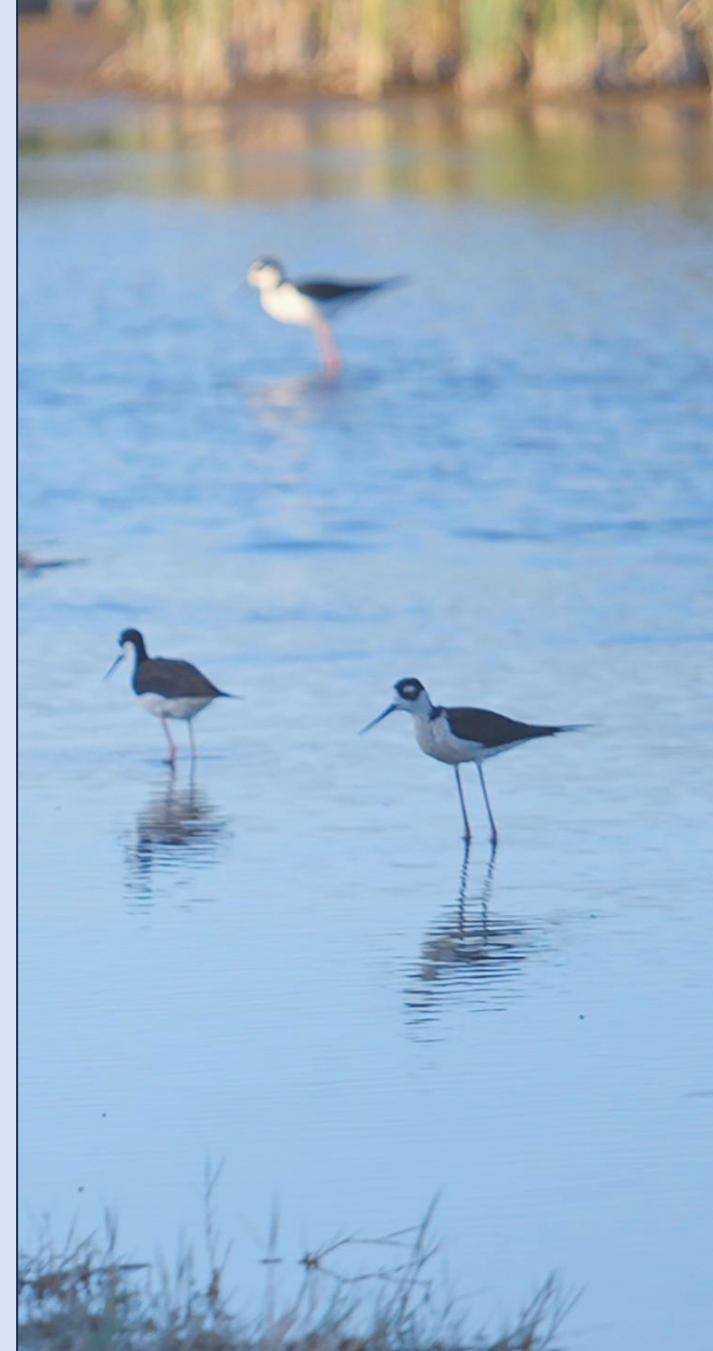
Collaboration with state, Tribal, local and federal partners

Examples of ongoing infrastructure projects to respond to drought and build economic and rural development opportunities

- Elephant Butte Reservoir - Rio Grande conveyance improvements
- Lower Rio Grande
- Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Pipeline
- Eastern NM Rural Water Pipeline

Additional ongoing programs contribute to water security

- Negotiating and implementing Indian Water Rights Settlements
- Addressing dam safety needs throughout the state
- Expanding the Acequia programs





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Interstate Stream Commission