

# New Mexico Office of the State Engineer/ Interstate Stream Commission



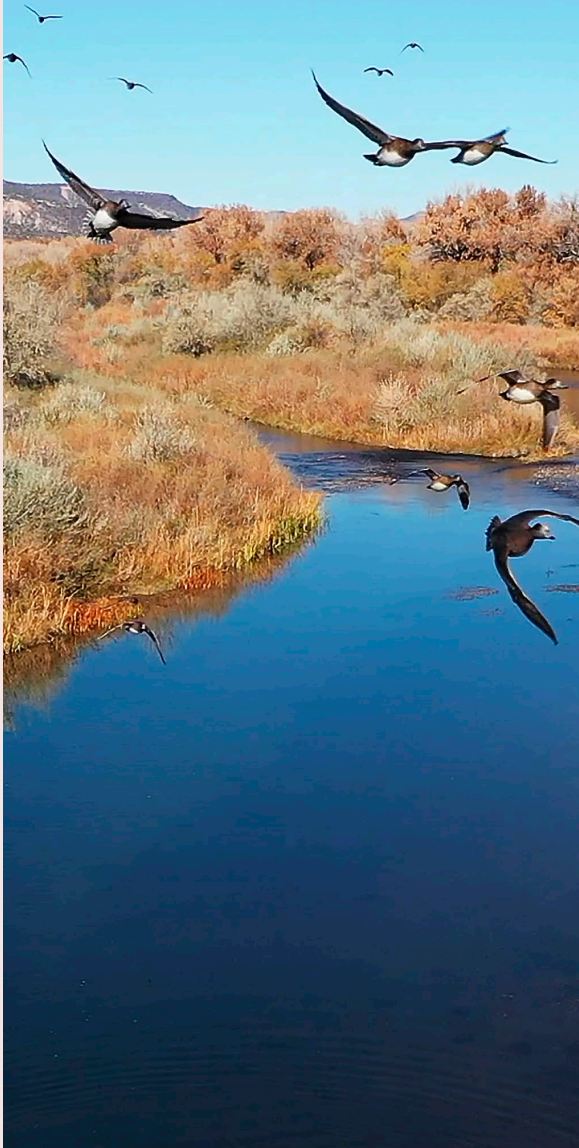
## Data Centers: Water and Energy Use

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Interim Water and Natural Resources Committee

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# Data Centers: Water and Energy Use

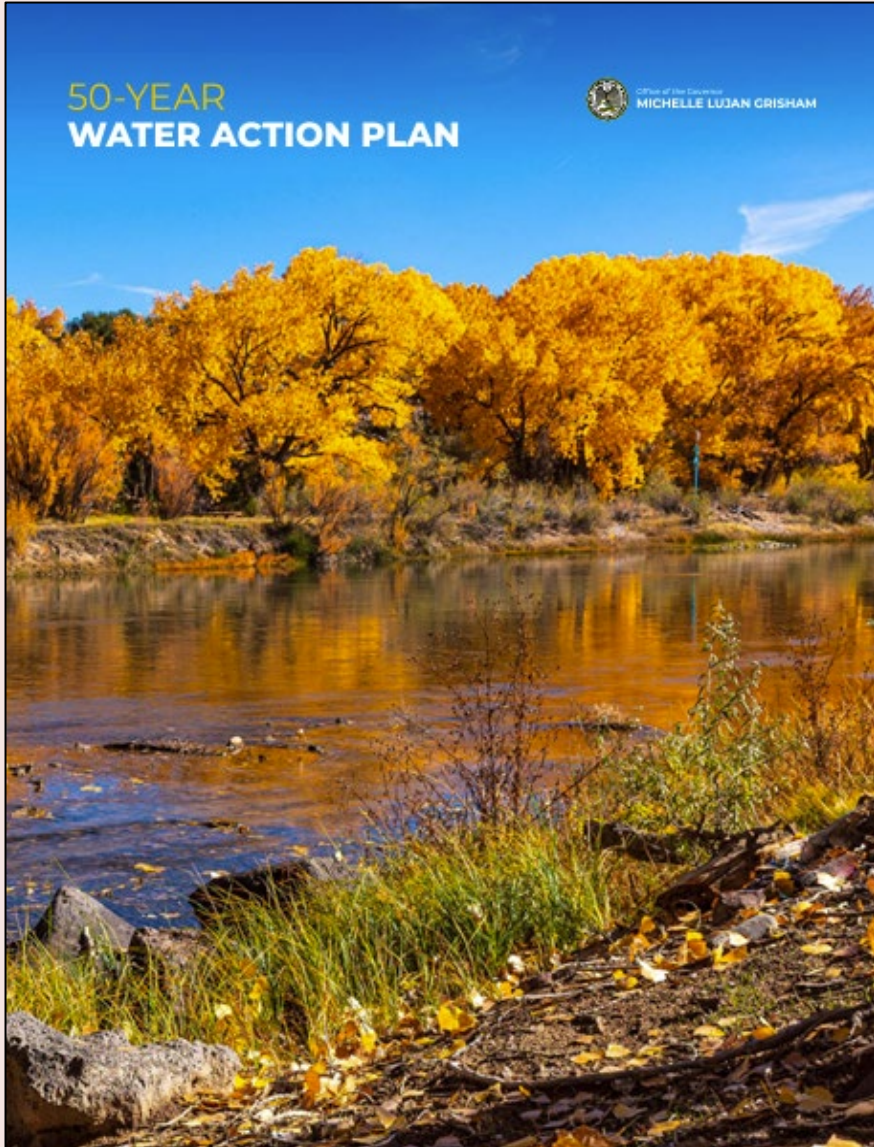


## Presentation Overview

- 50-Year Water Action Plan goal to protect existing water resources and develop new, brackish water resources
  - New Mexicans need to conserve water across all sectors, but we can also develop new, brackish water resources through the Strategic Water Supply
- Water use estimates for large industrial uses like data centers generally depend on two factors: the type of energy source involved and the method for cooling involved
- Regulatory Framework
  - Water can be available for new industrial uses in New Mexico through existing water sources or development of new water sources
  - New water sources could include:
    - Groundwater subject to non-impairment of existing rights
    - Strategic Water Supply – treated brackish water



# 50-Year Water Action Plan



## Water Conservation

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

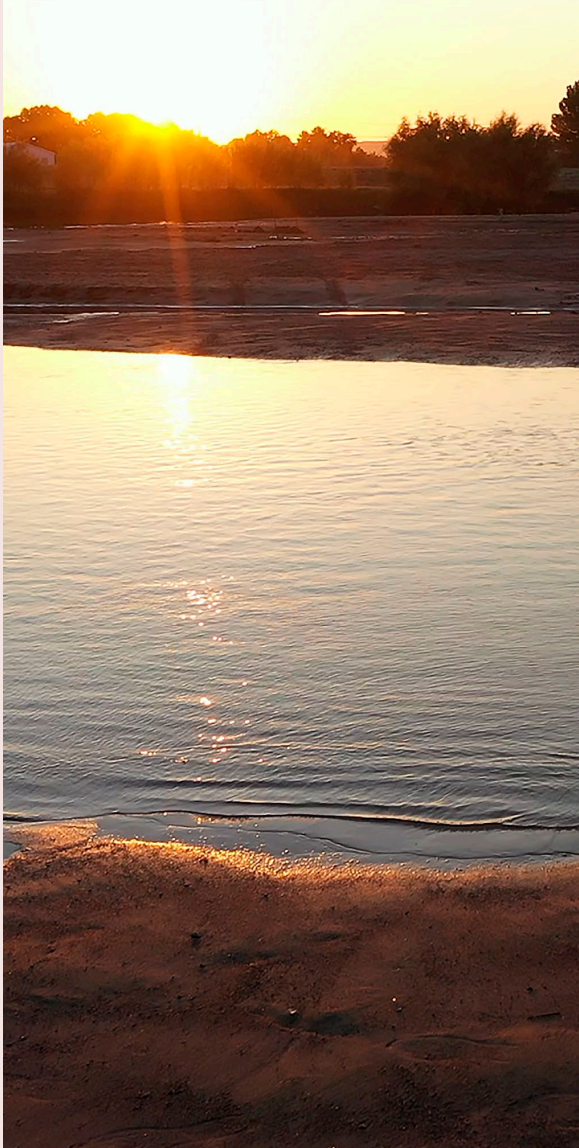
## New Water Supplies

- **B1** Strategic Water Supply to develop treated brackish water (initial \$40M appropriation)
- **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 & stormwater infrastructure
- **C4** Protect & restore watersheds

# Strategic Water Supply



## Strategic Water Supply

Making every drop count.



- Advances the exploration, production, and treatment of brackish water to protect New Mexico's freshwater resources.
- Provides grants and contracts to eligible entities for projects to utilize brackish water.
- Brackish water is groundwater that has higher salinity than freshwater (greater than one thousand parts per million of dissolved solids).

### **Committed to Supporting:**

- Vital Treatment Plant Construction Projects
- Innovative Research and Demonstration Projects, including Pioneering Design Pilots
- Comprehensive Feasibility Studies or Environmental Documentation Projects



# Strategic Water Supply



- Grant Program: Over \$100 million in requests from over 10 public entities throughout the State
- Contracts: Responses to Requests for Proposals are under review per required GSD process
- Review Committee comprised of experts from NMED, OSE, IAD, NMT, NMSU, DFA, EDD
- Grant and Contract awards completed by the end of 2025

### Funding Available

\$40 Million appropriated to the Strategic Water Supply to allocate to grants and contracts

### Program Goals

Provide new water for community uses  
Protect and preserve freshwater resources  
Promote robust local economies  
Create jobs  
Support New Mexico's clean energy transition

### Eligible Entities: Grants

Counties Municipalities State agencies  
Political subdivisions of New Mexico  
State institutions of higher education Federally recognized Indian nations, tribes, or pueblos in New Mexico

### Eligible Entities: Contracts

For-profit businesses Non-profits  
Counties Municipalities  
Other political subdivisions State agencies  
State institutions of higher education  
Federally recognized Indian nations, tribes, or pueblos in New Mexico

# Water Rights Permitting Process

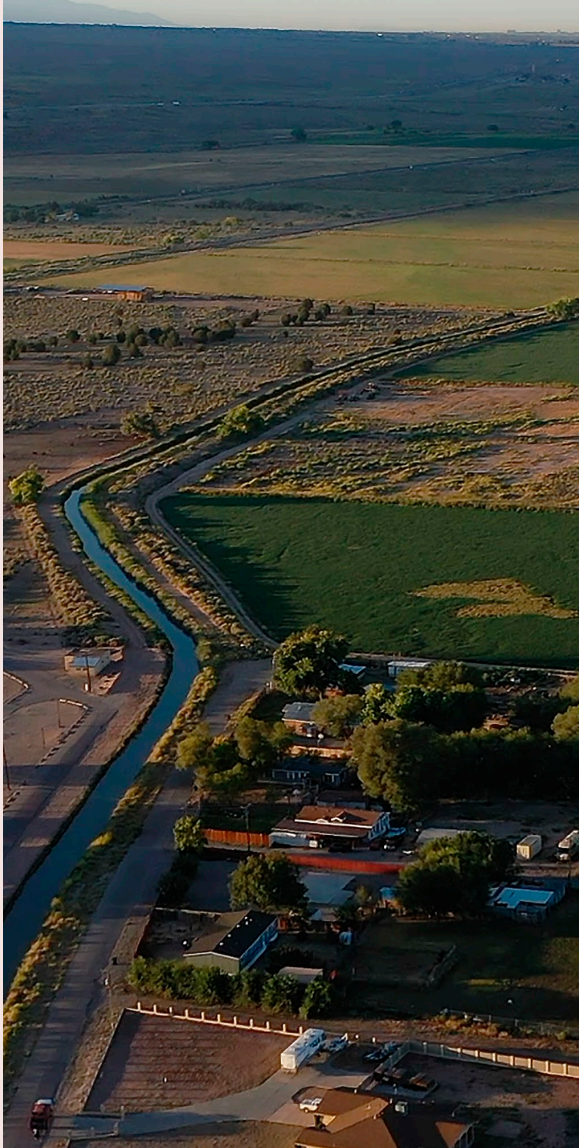


## Process for using *existing* water supplies

- Permit required to change any element of a water right or make a new appropriation
- Procedural and substantive protections for existing water rights owners and interstate streams
- Applications involve a 70-day publication plus extensive review by OSE staff
- Protests trigger administrative hearing process
- Court appeal is available after exhaustion of State Engineer appeal process



# Water Rights Permitting Process



## Process for developing *new* water supplies

- **Threshold inquiry for new appropriations:**
  - **Is there water available to appropriate?**
- If yes, can apply for a permit to use the new source
- Follow the same the process for transfers of existing water rights (notice, opportunity to protest, OSE technical evaluation of impacts)
- No unappropriated surface water
- Limited available fresh groundwater
- **Action B3 from 50-Year Water Action Plan: Additional aquifer characterization work is in progress**

**The Strategic Water Supply Program is an option for projects involving “treated brackish water”**

- Projects must comply with OSE and NMED permit requirements
- Applications to utilize brackish water from any depth are subject to OSE staff review for impairment
- Opportunities for protest exist

# Example: META Data Center - Los Lunas

- META is solar powered Data Center
- The average annual usage is 213.40 ac-ft = approximately 860 households (,25 acre/feet each)
- Water consumption is primarily for cooling the facility
- Comprises a total area of approximately 537 acres

