



New Mexico Environment Department

Strategic Water Supply Program Update

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Water and Natural Resources Committee
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Leap Ahead Analysis

NEW MEXICO BUREAU OF GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
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Climate Change in New Mexico Over the Next 50 Years: Impacts on Water Resources

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WATER RESOURCES

THE SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION

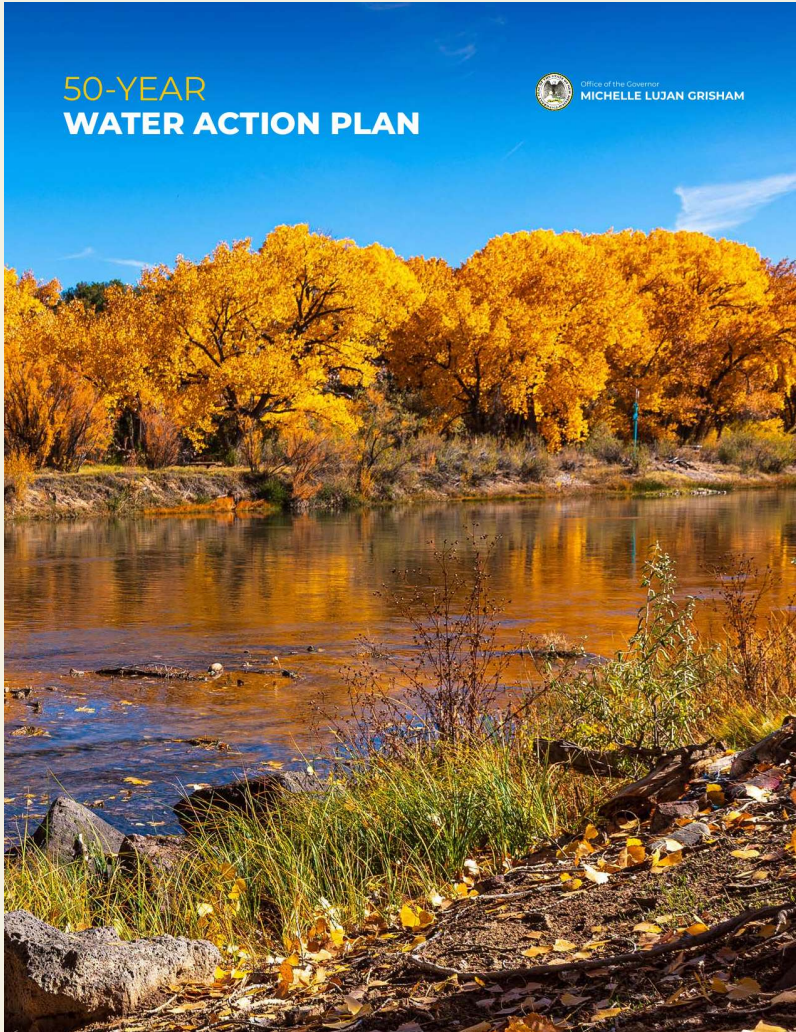
A 2022 synthesis of peer-reviewed research, technical reports, and datasets on how climate change will affect New Mexico's water resources over the next 50 years.

A HOTTER, DRIER NEW MEXICO

- 5–7°F warmer on average
- 16–28% decline in major-river flows
- Thinner snowpack, earlier runoff, drier soils, and more intense wildfire
- Planning implication: approximately 25% less water within 50 years



The 50-Year Water Action Plan converts the science into 11 priority actions



THREE COMPLEMENTARY STRATEGIES

- ❑ **CONSERVE** — Reduce demand and system losses
- ❑ **DEVELOP** — Add new supplies and aquifer knowledge
- ❑ **PROTECT** — Safeguard water quality and watersheds

WHERE STRATEGIC WATER SUPPLY FITS

- ❑ Strategic Water Supply advances the “new water supplies” strategy by developing treated brackish water—reducing pressure on freshwater while supporting communities, critical infrastructure, and economic development.



Impact of Water Availability

Economic growth depends on three enabling systems

Energy

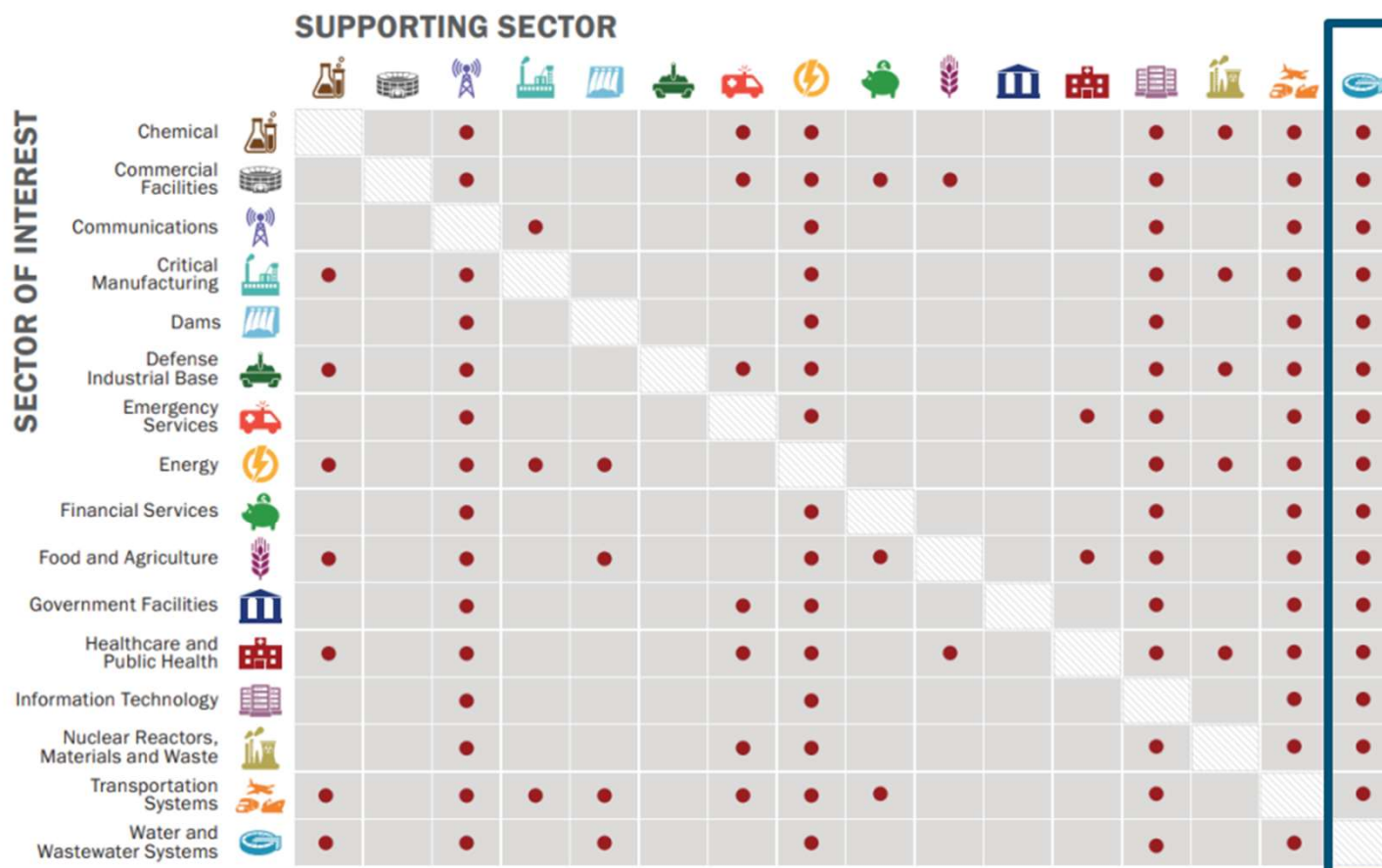
Workforce

Water



Every critical sector ultimately depends on water systems

Central role of water for critical infrastructures



Source: DHS CISA

3

Water and wastewater systems are the common dependency across all 15 sectors shown



The Strategic Water Supply Act: A New Pathway to Protect New Mexico's Freshwater Resources

HB 137 | ENACTED IN 2025

Established the Strategic Water Supply (SWS) Program to advance projects that explore, produce, treat, and beneficially use brackish water—creating new supplies while preserving freshwater.

THE SWS PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO:

- ❑ Provide water for community and economic uses
- ❑ Preserve New Mexico's freshwater systems
- ❑ Strengthen local economies and create jobs
- ❑ Support the clean-energy transition



The SWS Act Pairs Funding with Clear Program Authority

STRATEGIC WATER SUPPLY FUND

- ❑ A non-reverting fund supports long-term investment. The program began with \$40M in 2025
- ❑ The Legislature added \$35M for 2026.

NMED AND OSE CAN AWARD GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

- ❑ Eligible projects that advance:
 - ▣ Brackish-water exploration and characterization
 - ▣ Production, conveyance, and storage
 - ▣ Treatment technologies and facilities
 - ▣ Community or regional water-supply projects



2025 SWS Contracts – \$13 million

Three investments test how brackish water can move from resource identification to practical use

WSP

Drilling, testing, and mapping brackish water aquifers and recommending best sites for future use

Indewater

Develop a mobile treatment plant to remove salt from brackish water in rural and Tribal communities

Harmony

Install a water filtration system at Menefee Farms in Lake Arthur to provide drinking water to cattle



2025 SWS Grants - \$26 million

Seven projects build a statewide pipeline—from research and feasibility through treatment and infrastructure.

Alamo Navajo
School Board

Construction of a small-scale brackish water treatment plant.

City of Anthony

Environmental analysis and testing for a brackish groundwater pilot.

Village of Cuba

Design of a zero-waste desalination facility.

UNM

Statewide evaluation of brackish water management economic and environmental tradeoffs.

Pueblo of Laguna

Tribal-led feasibility study characterizing brackish water.

NM Tech

Advanced membrane research to recover over 98% of high-purity water.

Arrowhead Center at
NMSU

Establishment of a Brine Valorization Accelerator Hub.



2026 SWS Funding - \$35 Million Available

- **Grants RFA Released August 20 – Applications due October 20**
 - Prioritizes projects that are aligned with existing water plans, support community benefits and economic development goals, and result in production of treated water for use
- **Contracts RFP anticipated end of August**
 - Encourages public-private partnerships to pair community water needs with private-sector technology, expertise, and investment (Community Opportunity Profiles)
 - Voluntary profiles pair community need with a visible opportunity to connect to potential offeror's/technical service providers
- **Both funding opportunities emphasize water's role in supporting critical infrastructure, economic development goals, and creating community benefits**



Questions?

Thank you!