



CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
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Water and Natural Resources Interim Committee
New Mexico State Legislature
Santa Fe, NM

Re: HM102 regarding governance of the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority

Honorable Interim Committee Members:

It is with disappointment that I am unable to attend your hearing of HM102 tomorrow. I have previously testified before committees along with Representative Romero. I ask that this letter be placed in the record of the Interim Committee.

I served on the Board of the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA) from 2006-2010 representing Albuquerque City Council, serving twice as Vice Chair. I was initially excited to be involved in the oversight of such an important public utility. My impression of the administration of the Authority by Mr. Mark Sanchez and his team was excellent, and remains so today. This statement in no way reflects on the current administration; however, time marches on and the current administration will not be in place forever.

It is the responsibility of the Board to provide public oversight of operations and creation of policies. However, in my 13 years of experience serving and observing the Board, its makeup has annually changed, resulting in a lack of continuity. Furthermore, the board membership is made up of individuals elected to other seats with their own pressing responsibilities. Little time is spent at the public meetings on discussion and questions, which are commonly referred to "offline" discussion with staff.

In the case of City Council members of the Board, they are appointed annually by the President of the Council, who customarily changes annually. This results in a "rotation" of Councilors going on and off the Board and lack of continuity of oversight. Whether elected or appointed, the public oversight of our precious water resource deserves a more focused and representative Board.

Sincerely,

Isaac Benton
City Councilor, District 2

Cc: Rep. Andres Romero andres.romero@nmlegis.gov
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