



New Mexico Office of the State Engineer/ Interstate Stream Commission



Strategic Water Reserve – 20 Years

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Water and Natural Resources Committee

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Strategic Water Reserve – Then & Now



2005 Beginnings

In response to controversies related to interstate litigation, endangered species, and drought, a broad coalition wins legislation to create the Strategic Water Reserve.

Current Holdings & Accomplishments

San Juan River

- Up to 20,000 acre-feet per year leased from the Jicarilla Apache Nation. Water is released from Navajo Dam to support endangered species and interstate water management decisions.

Rio Grande

- 1,085 acre-feet per year leased in the Middle Rio Grande supports endangered species and compact deliveries.
- 72 acre-feet per year purchased in the Lower Rio Grande reduces groundwater depletions.

Pecos River

- 1,649 acre-feet per year purchased
- 2,326 acre-feet per year leased
- Groundwater pumped to the river through the Vaughan Conservation Pipeline supports endangered species and compact deliveries.

Canadian River

- Up to 5 cubic feet per second instream flow is permitted below Ute Dam to support endangered species.



2025 Statutory Changes



Broader Purposes, Dedicated Fund

The Interstate Stream Commission may acquire water or water rights by purchase, lease, or donation to assist the state in:

1. Complying with interstate stream compacts or court decrees;
2. Water management efforts for the benefit of threatened or endangered species, or in programs intended to avoid additional listings; or
3. **New:** Water management or conservation efforts designed to support *aquifer recharge or reduce ground water depletion, in order to promote stream flow or other environmental benefits*.

New: When establishing priorities, the ISC shall consider *supplementary benefits*, such as supporting traditional and cultural practices, habitat improvement or recreational opportunities.

New: Creation of the *Strategic Water Reserve Fund*: non-reverting except balances over \$15 million.



Strategic Water Reserve Fund



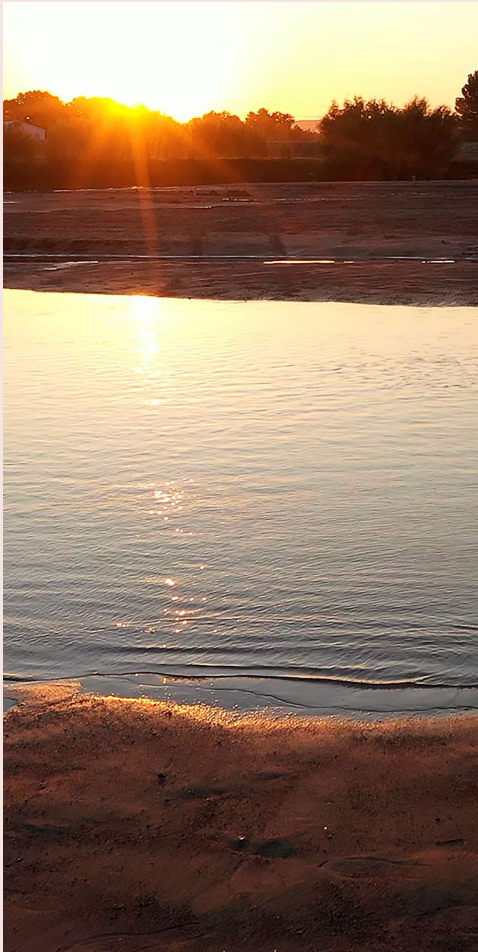
- Non-reverting \$15M Strategic Reserve Fund created in 2025
 - Will allow time to seek and complete transactions
 - Addresses the come-and-go history of funding
 - No dollars yet appropriated to the fund
- Past appropriations through 2022 expended, pulled back, or reverted
- 2023/2024 appropriations committed for existing leases and purchases under negotiation



Year	Appropriated	Pulled Back
2005	\$2,800,000	
2006	\$2,000,000	
2009		\$1,400,000
2010		\$600,000
2014	\$2,000,000	
2017		\$1,758,000
2020	\$750,535	
2022	\$500,000	
2023	\$7,500,000	
2024	\$1,000,000	



Looking Forward



- Continued flexibility to meet changing climate and diverse basin needs
- Partnerships with communities
- Water for broader array of uses
- Sufficient and reliable funding from diverse sources is critical

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