



Water Statement

July 2024

PREAMBLE:

Water is life. It is imperative to know these words are a recognition of the profound nature of water. To Indigenous Peoples, New Mexico's first water stewards, as well as many of us, water is a living entity with a female spiritual personification; a miraculous life form that all life needs to live. In knowing this truth, we flow with her to strengthen the clarity of our purpose to protect our water.

Indigenous knowledge says giving this recognition prompts the power and authority of water giving us the greatest advantage to improve our water use and its protection. To not give this recognition to the sanctity of water invokes a resistance that compromises the beneficial conclusion we strive for. In living this truth, we have the greatest opportunity to protect water for our future grandchildren.

It is incumbent on the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council to advocate for policies to assure that our waters are used to the optimum for our life sustenance, and to meet the needs of our citizens to provide food security through agriculture. Water is one of the greatest resources New Mexico has and it deserves our utmost commitment and vigilant advocacy.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council (Policy Council) values clean water for the cultivation of nutritious, culturally significant, local foods. Thus, water in the State must be protected, conserved, and expanded where possible.

The Policy Council is committed to responsible and sustainable use of water. Our waters must be protected with a focus on ensuring a continued adequate supply for New Mexico farmers.

The Policy Council believes that planning for use of all water in New Mexico, or any contemplated strategic initiatives developed by public agencies, now and for the future, must place a priority on providing adequate clean water for local food production by New Mexico farmers, cultivators, and growers. By doing so, these producers are economically and environmentally resilient and able to continue to provide healthy foods.

In working toward these goals, the Policy Council identifies the following tasks and objectives. *The Policy Council will support and participate in the following:*

1. Ensuring that agricultural water users have equitable, social, political, and economic access to all processes to protect their water rights and eliminating the threat of loss of a water right through non-use.

Often, smaller agriculture water users do not have the financial means to participate and protect their water rights.

2. Supporting and promoting the prudent use of water through conservation projects, the development of new technologies for efficient water use, while recognizing and respecting Indigenous and Acequias cultural practices and traditions.

3. Expanding and funding the voluntary placement of conservation easements over farms, ensuring that those properties remain in agricultural production and have water rights in perpetuity. Expand the eligibility for the conservation easement tax credit for the protection and conservation of productive soils and farmland.

4. Providing input to discussions about alternative water use agreements between competing stakeholders as needed.

5. Participating in strategic water planning discussions that will serve all water users and uses in New Mexico.

6. Ensuring that those persons or entities that pollute our waters are responsible for returning any such polluted water to its same condition prior to the pollution and holding such persons and/or entities accountable to the full extent of applicable laws and regulations.

7. Ensuring that the State Engineer's Office and other appropriate agencies and water authorities regulating all waters within the State of New Mexico, are accountable to all water users.

For more information visit our website at:

Contact: [New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council – The NMFAPC is a statewide coalition which focuses on policy initiatives that create healthy food and agriculture systems in New Mexico. \(nmfoodpolicy.org\)](http://nmfoodpolicy.org)

Farm to Table and the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council

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