

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I'm Eileen Dodds, and serve as Secretary and Treasurer of the NM Water Dialogue.

Thank you for allowing the Water Dialogue this opportunity to speak today.

The Water Dialogue formed over 20 years ago when people from all over the state came together with concerns about implementing the regional water planning statutes. The biggest concern was that there hadn't been adequate guidance provided by anyone for regions to draft plans.

In 1992, responding to a request from regional water planners, the ISC appointed a committee, to develop a template for regional water planning. Development of this 1994 document took months. A majority of the 14 committee members involved in this effort formed the core of what became the Water Dialogue.

Ensuing years have seen the WD continuing to focus on pursuing legislative funding for the RWP, helping draft legislation to create a SWP, and sponsoring statewide annual meetings to explore issues related to water planning.

That 1994 Regional Water Planning Handbook, in its introductory letter, says that an "important factor is the participation, awareness, and involvement of the people of the region. The planning process should encourage local people to express local concerns and discuss the difficult decisions faced by every community in N.M. "

This year, as Mr. Lopez has pointed out, the Legislature authorized \$400,000 for water planning. The ISC appointed a 3-member planning sub-committee which adopted a work plan this spring. This was to include posting draft changes to the RWP Handbook by July, and convening a meeting that would include people involved in the earlier planning work, if possible, to get input into the draft. The criteria to be used to select regions for support of their updates would also be defined in July, and requests for proposals for planning funds would be due in September.

After 2 months of silence, this process was abandoned without notice. Instead, the ISC scheduled a meeting on September 6th, with an agenda item that read: "Request Approval for Regional Water Plan Template Update ". People who asked were told that this Update would NOT BE AVAILABLE prior to the meeting on the 6th, when it was scheduled to be approved. Then, at that meeting, attendees were told that the ISC had now decided to allow 2 weeks for public comment. To our knowledge, the ISC made NO FURTHER EFFORT to notify regional water planners around the State of this DRAFT or the DEADLINE.

The Dialogue informed its membership. We posted copies of the draft on our website. We also contacted some 60 participants of a 2010 meeting of regional water planners that had been sponsored by the Dialogue and attended by ISC representatives. It was held to discuss updating the template. 14 of the 16 regions sent people to that meeting held at Seville NWR.

The Water Dialogue believes that it is important for regional representatives to have input into this process. Some regions still have active water planning councils. Others will have to rebuild, but this public process is critical for successful implementation for everyone.

Community participation in the planning process is essential to common understanding. It promotes a "buy-in" by the community, and the Dialogue supports this more collaborative approach. We are encouraged by Mr. Lopez' presentation and are glad to hear that the ISC will now be including public participation in the template update process.

Thank you for your time.