



## *New Mexico Acequia Association*

*Taos Valley • Mora Valley • La Joya • Río de Chama • Acequias Norteñas • Questa/Cerro • Alcalde/Velarde/El Guique • South Valley • Río de las Gallinas • Mimbres Valley • Chamisal y Ojito • Gallina/Capulín • Embudo Valley • El Rito • Carnuel • Río San José • Río Jemez • Río Tularosa • Río Quemado, Río en Medio, Río Frijoles, Río Santa Cruz • Río Pecos • Río Pojoaque • Upper Río Hondo • Estancia Valley • Santa Teresita*

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November 18, 2009

The Honorable Governor Bill Richardson  
State Capitol Building, Suite 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor Richardson:

I am writing on behalf of the New Mexico Acequia Association to ask for your consideration of acequia projects that have received Capital Outlay funds in recent years. We are well aware of the budget shortfalls facing the state and are respectful of the difficult deliberations facing you and the legislature with regard to balancing the budget.

We are requesting that you seriously consider the significance of acequias to New Mexico and potential benefits of acequia projects to rural communities throughout the state. Several of these projects are slated for completion before the 2010 growing season. Others may need additional time but are making reasonable progress as well. We recommend the following types of projects be exempt from any administrative freeze of capital outlay funds:

1. Acequia projects that are in progress and who have third-party contracts executed.
2. Acequia projects that are small in scale and self-constructed, i.e. without the services of a contractor. Many of these appropriations cover the costs of materials, and labor in some cases. Such projects are done in this manner because of their relative simplicity and because the services of a contractor are not necessary.
3. Acequia projects that must be completed in order to irrigate during the 2010 growing season and are making good progress toward completion in the next few months.
4. Acequia projects that have Work Agreements signed with the Interstate Stream Commission and have adequate funds to complete a specific phase of the project along with a specific timeline for completion.
5. Water storage projects that are in the design phase and can start construction in 2010 based on expedient completion of dam safety regulation requirements. Dam projects that are held up in the Dam Safety Bureau regulatory process should not be penalized because of the delays that are the result of bureau inaction.
6. Any capital outlay funds that are an integral part of a state-federal cost share arrangement. In some
7. instances, state dollars are leveraged with federal dollars that are already committed to those projects. State
8. action to freeze those dollars will affect federal dollars coming into New Mexico.

The Interstate Stream Commission has worked diligently in recent weeks to assist acequias in moving their projects forward in order to avoid any cuts in capital outlay funds. We are confident that a continuation of this effort will result in good progress on the acequia projects described above. We are also hopeful about efforts between the our organization, the Interstate Stream Commission, and federal agencies to strengthen existing programs, build acequia capacity to manage their respective projects, and to develop effective funding strategies.

Thank you for your ongoing support of acequias and for your consideration of our request to prevent loss of funds that are essential to acequia projects in communities throughout the state. We ask you to bear in mind that although these projects are relatively small in cost, they reap significant benefits for large numbers of families in rural New Mexico.

We are requesting a meeting with you to discuss these issues further and to lay the groundwork for future work. I can be reached at 505-995-9644 or [lamorena@lasacequias.org](mailto:lamorena@lasacequias.org). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Garcia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "G".

Paula Garcia  
Executive Director

Cc:  
Speaker of the House Ben Lujan  
Senator Carlos Cisneros  
Senator Phil Griego  
Ralph Vigil, Chairman, New Mexico Acequia Commission