

HM1 Working Group
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August 17, 2018

Hand delivered

Ms. Lucia Sanchez
Water Planner
New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Ms. Sanchez:

In response to House Memorial 1 (2017), the HM1 Working Group¹ is pleased to provide the NM Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) with its proposal entitled *Making the Case for Change*. It is a summary of the major water policy problems and solutions identified by the HM1 Working Group. The Working Group delivered this proposal to the HM1 (2017) sponsor, Rep. Tomas Salazar, on June 30, 2018, and expects to present it to the Water and Natural Resources Committee.

Making the Case for Change identifies four major problems whose remedy is urgent for the State's long-term health. It recommends a set of five core initiatives that are necessary to effectively address these four problems.

We recognize other important water issues need to be addressed. Key among them are the uncertainty over quantification of Native American Tribal water rights and the impact of their resolution. Non-Tribal water issues will largely be addressed through the newly effective state and regional water planning processes outlined in this proposal. These recommendations are not new. They parallel those in both the 2003 State Water Plan and the December 2017 State Water Plan Town Hall.

The widely recognized need to improve water planning processes led to HM1 and this report. Amid a groundswell of critical voices nearly three years ago, the New Mexico Water Dialogue convened a statewide meeting at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge to address concerns about a "second round" of regional water planning then being directed and staffed by employees and consultants of the ISC. Attendees included representative citizen-planners from 14 of the 16 water planning regions and other NMWD Board members. Many had participated in the initial regional planning effort, 10-

¹ The authors refer to these submissions as products of an "HM1 Working Group" to acknowledge that the Task Force HM1 anticipated would be convened by the ISC was never established.

20 years earlier. The ISC Director attended with ISC staff and contractors. Participants identified substantial deficiencies in the methodology, process and product.²

A result of that meeting was the formation of a “Governance Study Group” (GSG), eleven citizen water planners from several water planning regions around New Mexico.³ GSG's original intention was to better link planning to hydrologic reality and the processes by which the State's water is actually governed. The GSG met regularly since the Sevilleta session. The first products of the group were six papers on water planning issues,⁴ which were discussed with ISC director Deborah Dixon and ISC staff. To move the recommendations from the papers into actions, the GSG worked with legislators to develop HM1 (2017), which passed unanimously.

As you know, the ISC, for various reasons – staffing changes, a lack of resources and conflicting priorities (including a deadline for completing a new State water plan) – did not participate in this response to HM1. Thus, this report is the product of the HM1 Working Group, and not the work of the Task Force requested by HM1. However, it does address the problem areas and make specific recommendations in response to HM1.

The HM1 Working Group obtained written review comments from a wide range of knowledgeable individuals and this report benefitted substantially from such input. *Making the Case for Change* includes an appendix of these review comments and their disposition.

Making the Case for Change was submitted to comply with the HM1 (2017) deadline of July 1, before the draft 2018 State Water Plan was released. However, it is clear now that the HM1 recommendations go well beyond and include a specific set of proposed actions a sense of urgency and that the draft plan indefensibly omits.

The ISC should give full consideration to the problems and solutions presented in *Making the Case for Change*. The ISC staff and members need to seek the resources and collaboration necessary to implement the identified solutions.

Sincerely,

Bob Wessely
HM1 Working Group

² Positive and negative experiences in each region are documented in the facilitator's report. Find it at <http://nmwaterdialogue.org/library/water-governance/sevilleta-workshop-july-28-2015-summary-report/view>.

³Members are Allyson Siwik (Region 4 - Silver City), Bob Wessely (Region 8 - Las Vegas), Dael Goodman (Region 11 - Las Cruces), Elaine Hebard (Region 12 - Albuquerque), Janet Jarratt (Region 12 - Los Lunas), John Brown (Region 12 - Corrales), Jeff Kiely (Region 6 - Grants), Larry Winn (Region 6 - Gallup), Norm Gaume (Region 12 - Sandoval Co.), Sharon Hausam (Region 12 - Albuquerque), Theresa Cardenas (Union of Concerned Scientists, New Mexico).

⁴ The issue papers are available at <http://nmwaterdialogue.org/library/water-governance/governance-study-group-issue-papers>: Governance and Institution Arrangements; Strengthening Linkages, Public Participation, Tribal Participation, Technical Information, Water Rights Adjudication