

Amid the water crisis of 2022, the New Mexico Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force developed 17 recommendations for government action. The State has boldly addressed many of them, but there is much more to be done. The Water Ambassadors (former members of the Task Force) offer the following recommendations for FY26 to address immediate needs while also preparing for a future of declining water supplies.

Appropriations

\$ 360.1M Total

Invested to meet urgent needs and build the resilience of our water systems.

1. Water for families and farms

\$161.2M

- **Community water systems:** regionalization and infrastructure
- **Indian water right settlements:** state funding to leverage billions in federal funds
- **Agricultural water resilience:** support for new technologies and practices
- **Acequias and community ditches:** disaster recovery funds, leverage for federal funds

\$100M

NMFA /
Water Trust Fund

\$40M

OSE/ISC

\$10M

NMDA

\$11.2M

ISC

2. Water for nature

\$147M

- **Wildfire, flooding, and drought disaster recovery:** loans and matching funds
- **Forest Action Plan implementation**
- **River Stewardship Program**
- **Strategic Water Reserve**

\$100M

DFA

\$32M

EMNRD

\$10M

NMED

\$5M

ISC

3. Modernizing water management

\$51.9M

- **Aquifer mapping and monitoring**
- **Water Data Act implementation**
- **Technical support for regional water planning**
- **Salary adjustments and new positions for priorities**
- **Water Data Act implementation**
- **Irrigation and acequia trust funds**
- **Data analysis and hydrogeologic modeling**
- **Community engagement in regional water planning**
- **Agricultural water resilience coordinator position**
- **Staff for the NM Acequia Commission**

\$28.7M

NMBGMR/HED

\$5.2M

NMBGMR, OSE/ISC,
NMED, EMNRD

\$5M

OSE/ISC

\$5.75M
(recurring)

OSE/ISC/NMED/
NMDA/IAD/DFA

\$2.14M
(recurring)

NMBGMR, OSE/ISC
NMED, EMNRD

\$2.5M
(recurring)

OSE/ISC

\$1.5M
(recurring)

NMBGMR/HED

\$800,000
(recurring)

OSE/ISC

\$175,000
(recurring)

NMDA

\$170,000
(recurring)

DFA

Statutory Reforms

- **Amend the Water Quality Act** to authorize a state surface water permitting program that protects streams and wetlands, filling the gap created by the removal of federal protections from most of New Mexico's waterways.
- **Expand the uses of the Strategic Water Reserve** to increase flexibility and effectiveness in addressing local water needs.
- **Modernize water law enforcement** by increasing monitoring and fines while protecting the rights of vulnerable communities.

Agency Names

DFA	Department of Finance and Administration
EMNRD	Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
IAD	Indian Affairs Department
ISC	Interstate Stream Commission
NMBGMR	New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources
HED	Higher Education Department
NMDA	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
NMED	New Mexico Environment Department
NMFA	New Mexico Finance Authority
OSE	Office of the State Engineer