

DOMENICI SAYS NMSU-GE PARTNERSHIP HEIGHTENS FOCUS ON N.M. FOR WATER AVAILABILITY ANSWERS

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The following information was released by the office of New Mexico Senator Pete V. Domenici: U.S. Senator Pete Domenici today said the partnership of New Mexico State University and the General Electric Co. will further add to heighten the focus on New Mexico for breakthroughs in solving water scarcity problems here and around the world.

Domenici today took part in the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between NMSU and GE, a collaboration that will engage the best minds at the school and GE's water expertise to produce affordable technologies that address growing demands for water particularly in arid areas like New Mexico.

The agreement was signed by NMSU President Michael V. Martin and Jeff Connelly, vice president of GE Water & Process Technologies.

The MOU, which includes a broad educational incentive for NMSU students, will work to develop advanced water treatment technologies to reduce the cost of creating new sources of freshwater by 25 percent over the next three to five years.

This is a bold partnership to harness some of the brightest minds to find better ways to make more water available in water-scarce areas of the world, Domenici said. GE's numerous commercial successes and NMSU expertise in water research will ensure that this initiative will produce technologies that address our water supply needs.

Domenici noted that GE's expertise in developing commercial water technologies adds to the growing interest in water R&D in New Mexico, where the Navy, Sandia National Laboratories and other federal agencies are carrying out major water desalination projects. For instance, Domenici funded the construction of the Tularosa Basin National Desalination Research Facility where promising new technologies will be tested. It is scheduled to be completed in spring 2007.

This is a unique and creative partnership between a university and a major corporation that is meant to solve real problems for real people, NMSU President Martin said.

"This initiative is another indication that New Mexico State is emerging as a center of excellence in research in water, water conservation and water management in arid climates. We are gratified that people of stature, such as Senator Domenici, recognize this and are willing to invest in us, Martin said.

Promoting the availability of safe, clean water in the U.S. and around the world is a central goal of GE's company-wide ecomagination initiative, said Connelly, vice president and general manager of GE Water & Process Technologies.

One key challenge to meeting this goal is developing more affordable water treatment solutions, and that is what our research collaboration with New Mexico State University is aimed at solving. We appreciate Senator Domenici's support of this important collaboration. It is a great example of how industry, academia and government can work together on such a critically important endeavor, Connelly continued.

The NMSU-GE partnership will concentrate on further developing advanced water treatment technologies aimed at reducing stress placed on current water supplies, as well as overall consumption, energy use, and costs associated with creating and recycling water. The NMSU-GE partnership will involve R&D at both NMSU and at the GE Global Research Center in Niskayuna, N.Y.

It will also focus on water treatment technologies capable of removing harmful source water contaminants often responsible for making human consumption, irrigation and industrial plant production impossible.

Whether it is desalination, conservation or recycling, we must be innovative and forward-thinking in how we address water issues. It is incumbent on us to ensure that this vital resource is available if we expect to grow. That's not only true in New Mexico, but across the country and around the world, Domenici said. I will do everything I can to help the NMSU-GE partnership meet its ambitious goals.

Domenici has made progress in securing federal funding to support the NMSU-GE partnership, including \$1 million is included in the FY2007 Defense Appropriations Bill funds for NMSU and GE to undertake this water work. This funding is now law. Congress must complete work on the FY2007 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill that includes \$3.0 million added by Domenici to support this partnership.

The MOU also outlines exchanges between NMSU students and faculty and GE employees including: recruiting NMSU students to work at GE; having senior GE employees serve as adjunct professors at NMSU; and NMSU student and faculty internships at the GE Global Research Center.