

*Governor Richardson's June 2008 Policy Statement on the Gila and San Francisco Rivers*

It is imperative that the Gila and San Francisco Rivers be protected and preserved for future generations. To that end, I hereby reaffirm the direction that I provided in 2007 regarding planning on the Gila and San Francisco Rivers.

I want to reiterate and amplify on three specific aspects of my 2007 statement:

- First, it will be the policy of this administration that there be no planning or consideration of constructing any dam on these rivers, and I will do all I reasonably can to make that policy permanent.
- Second, the planning process will be open and inclusive.
- And third, the planning process must specifically include consideration of non-diversion alternatives to meet the current and future water demands of the region. I am skeptical that a new diversion will make economic and/or environmental sense, but the appropriate studies must be completed to support a decision about how to proceed.

The planning process must include inquiries on a range of topic areas already identified by the planning group, including:

- Needs assessment of regional water supply and demand
- Multi-stakeholder planning process including administration and public involvement
- Demand management/conservation
- Demographics
- Economics/Social
- Ecologic studies
- Hydrologic studies including characterization of surface and groundwater supplies within the four-county area considering drought and climate change

There must be a full suite of studies to assess the range of activities that might be undertaken under the 2004 Arizona Water Settlements Act to meet southwestern New Mexico's water demands – both today and into the future. These studies must specifically include consideration of non-diversion alternatives for meeting the water demands of the region, including investigation of further groundwater development and water gains from improved watersheds and watershed management, but will not include consideration of a dam across either the Gila or San Francisco Rivers.

First and foremost, we must assure ourselves that any activities undertaken to reap the potential benefits of the 2004 Arizona Water Settlements Act will not result in any detriment or impairment to the natural ecological functionality of these two rivers. The state is committed to ensuring a secure water future for Southwestern New Mexico while protecting valuable natural resources like the Gila and San Francisco Rivers.

The Gila planning process along with similar projects that are underway – including river ecosystem restoration projects and designation of key New Mexico headwaters as

Outstanding Natural Resource Waters – help to protect New Mexico’s rivers. A combination of these efforts will ensure that the Gila and San Francisco Rivers are protected into the future.