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## **New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Launches Public Meetings for the State Water Plan**

**(SANTA FE, New Mexico)** – In an effort to allow public input on how New Mexico balances its future water needs with limited supplies, the **New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission** will launch a series of public meetings, starting in July.

Governor Bill Richardson's Office has directed the Interstate Stream Commission to have a **comprehensive state water plan** in place by the end of 2003.

"I'm committed to developing a comprehensive state water plan in order to end the fighting among ourselves and plan for the future," said Governor Bill Richardson. "New Mexico has been in a drought for the past four years, and conditions may continue for several years to come. We must – as a state – work together to prepare for that. This is an opportunity for interested citizens to take an active role in discussions of water issues affecting our state and to help be a part of the problem solving process."

"It is important to balance the needs of all water users in the state. It is equally important that communities, businesses, and interested citizens have input in this process," said New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan Lopez. "We are on a very aggressive timeline to gather input for the comprehensive state water plan. Meetings will start in July and will continue through September, culminating in a Town Hall meeting in late September to synthesize the input gleaned from every region and produce a workable, long-term plan for water use in our state."

Public meetings will be held in 29 communities in every corner of the state. The first public meeting will be held in Clayton, New Mexico on July 9.

**(MORE)**

The schedule for the statewide public meetings for July, August, and September is as follows:

Clayton	7/9	Santa Rosa	8/4	Las Vegas	9/2
Raton	7/10	Clovis	8/6	Santa Fe	9/3
T or C	7/14	Tucumcari	8/7	Moriarty	9/4
Espanola	7/16	Deming	8/12	Isleta Pueblo	9/8
Tularosa	7/17	Reserve	8/13	Roswell	9/10
Jemez Pueblo	7/21	Silver City	8/14	Carlsbad	9/11
Las Cruces	7/23	Chama	8/18		
Anthony	7/24	Farmington	8/20		
Socorro	7/28	Shiprock	8/21		
Gallup	7/30	Albuquerque	8/25		
Taos	7/31	Hobbs	8/27		
		Acoma Pueblo	8/28		

The public forums will provide an opportunity for interested citizens to help shape water policy for the State of New Mexico by including discussions of topics such as water banking, drought contingency measures, strategies for water conservation, watershed restoration, water rights, shortage sharing, and other issues.

The nine-member Interstate Stream Commission is responsible for apportioning water between New Mexico and neighboring states on streams that cross state borders. The commission was also given water-planning responsibility for the state.

The Office of the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Commission are separate but companion agencies charged with administering the state's water resources. The agencies have power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation and distribution of almost all surface and ground water in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also secretary to the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees the staff of both agencies.

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