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For more information, contact:

Karin Stangl, Public Information Officer
Office of the State Engineer/Interstate Stream Commission
(505) 827-6139

Public Comment is Invited on New Mexico's First State Water Plan

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – Citizens with an interest in water issues affecting New Mexico are invited to comment on New Mexico's first comprehensive state water plan over the next two weeks.

The first draft of the comprehensive state water plan was unveiled at a joint meeting of the Interstate Stream Commission and the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Water, on October 22, in Santa Fe.

"We encourage suggestions for improvement of this draft," said Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López. "When completed, the state water plan will provide a policy framework for the Office of the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Commission to manage water issues and prioritize funding needs around the state in coming years. The plan will also include a broad-brush assessment of supply and demand. It is a work in progress and will continue to be refined over time."

Governor Richardson mandated that a comprehensive state water plan be in place by the end of December 2003. Information was gathered from public meetings in 29 communities throughout the state, from July through September. Comments received from those meetings are posted on the agency's web site along with the consensus report produced at the New Mexico First Town Hall Meeting in September.

(MORE)

The plan is now being reviewed by the Office of the State Engineer, the members of the Water Trust Board, and the Interstate Stream Commissioners. It is scheduled for final approval at a meeting of the Interstate Stream Commission in December.

To review a copy of the first draft of the comprehensive state water plan, it can be downloaded from the web site for the Office of the State Engineer, at www.ose.state.nm.us.

In order to ensure that comments are incorporated into the revised document, the public is encouraged to provide comments **by November 14, 2003**. The agency's goal is to finalize and release the revised document **no later than December 5, 2003**, so that the public can read the final document prior to adoption by the Commissioners.

Comments can be sent to the Interstate Stream Commission via the web site, or they can be mailed to:

Interstate Stream Commission - Santa Fe Office:
State Water Plan
PO Box 25102
Santa Fe, NM 87504-5102
Fax: 1-505-827-6188

Interstate Stream Commission - Albuquerque Office:
State Water Plan
121 Tijeras, NE, Suite 2000
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Fax: 1-505-764-3893

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

The Interstate Stream Commission is charged with separate duties including protecting New Mexico's right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts, as well as water planning.

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