



For immediate release:

March 7, 2005

For more information, contact:

Karin Stangl, Public Information Officer
(505) 827-6139

Senate Approves Water Legislation to Provide for a Strategic Water Reserve

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – The New Mexico State Senate passed on Saturday, March 5, Senate Bill 123, which calls for a strategic water reserve to allow the Interstate Stream Commission to purchase or lease water from willing sellers.

The Senate approved the measure, which was sponsored by Sen. Carlos Cisneros (D-Taos), by a 36 to 0 vote.

“This legislation is important because it gives the state more options for meeting interstate stream compact deliveries and for managing water for the benefit of threatened and endangered species,” said New Mexico State Engineer John D’Antonio.

Senate Bill 123 now heads to the House for consideration. House Bill 195, sponsored by Rep. Joe Stell (D-Carlsbad), is the identical bill on the House side. It has already passed the House and is up for consideration by Senate Committees.

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.

#