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The New Mexico Water Trust Board Announces Recommendations for 2006 Project Funding

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) — The New Mexico Water Trust Board has recommended more than \$21 million in funding for twenty-five water projects across the state.

“The goal of the Water Trust Board is to fund large regional water projects and to ensure that money available in the Water Project Fund best addresses New Mexico’s water needs into the future,” said State Engineer John D’Antonio. “Ultimately the Board wishes to promote water efficiency, water resource conservation and protection, and fair distribution and allocation of water to all users.”

Over the past five years, the New Mexico Legislature has taken important steps to secure a stable source of funding for water projects by providing an annual allocation of Severance Tax Bond proceeds to the Water Project Fund, and have recently increased their efforts by appropriating money to the Water Trust Fund. The Water Trust Board was created by the State Legislature to prioritize many different water projects across the state in need of that funding.

The Water Project Fund rules encourage project diversity and geographic dispersion and in keeping with those rules the Water Trust Board has recommended the following 25 projects to receive portions of the 2006 Severance Tax Bond proceeds:

Anthony WSD – Rehabilitation Project – \$750,000
City of Bloomfield – Water Treatment Expansion – \$875,000
City of Carlsbad – Wastewater Effluent Reuse – \$250,000
Carnuel MDWCA – Regional Water System - \$500,000
Claunch Pinto SWCD – Watershed Health, Restoration and Monitoring - \$600,000
Village of Columbus – Water System Improvements - \$895,000
Cuatro Villas MDWUA – Regional Water System – 924,438
Dona Ana MDWCA – Regional Surface Water Treatment - \$380,000
Eastern NM Rural Water – Regional Water - \$1,250,000
El Prado WSD – Water System Improvements - \$510,000

(MORE)

	– Regional Water System - \$1,000,000
City of Elephant Butte	– Regional Treatment System - \$1,211,751
Greater Chimayo MDWCA	– Water Transmission Facilities - \$500,000
City of Las Vegas	– Surface Water - \$1,404,140
City of Lordsburg	– Water Treatment - \$850,000
Los Alamos County	– Water/Wastewater Treatment Facility - \$650,800
Mora MDW&SA	– Water System Improvements - \$116,650
Northwest New Mexico COG	– Gallup/Rural Navajo Regional Water System - \$2,075,244
Pueblo of Pojoaque	– Water/Wastewater Treatment Facility - \$1,000,000
Rio de Chama Acequias Association	– Storage, Water Rights and Conservation - \$111,375
City of Santa Fe	– Buckman Surface Water Direct Diversion - \$2,000,000
Santo Domingo Tribe	– Watershed Restoration - \$293,000
Southside WUA	– Regional Raw Water Treatment - \$1,432,552
Town of Taos	– Treatment Plant Rehabilitation - \$1,300,000
Ute Creek SWCD	– Watershed Restoration and Management - \$581,784
	Total - \$21,461,734

To determine which projects are to be recommended for funding the Water Trust Board developed a letter of interest process to allow entities a cost-effective and timely manner of describing their projects. If determined sustainable by the board, then entities are allowed an opportunity to submit full applications which are scored utilizing an objective set of criteria which is available to applicants prior to submission of applications.

At the direction of the Water Trust Board, the New Mexico Finance Authority staff started evaluating potential loan and grant criteria that are fair to all eligible entities. Given the diverse nature of the entities and the services they provide to their own constituents, staff focused on a simple formula for all projects that could easily be understood by all stakeholders.

The State Engineer is the Chairman of the Water Trust Board. 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.

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