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New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Postpones Action on Water Agreement

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission voted today to postpone action on an innovative water agreement between the Commission and Intel Corporation.

“This proposed agreement between the Interstate Stream Commission and Intel is an excellent example of a public-private partnership that will greatly benefit our community as well as one of New Mexico’s largest employers and will also protect senior water users and our environment,” said Interstate Stream Commission Chairman Jim Dunlap of Farmington. “Nevertheless, in the interest of openness and transparency we believe it is in the best interest to delay action to allow the public to better understand the agreement.”

Under the proposed agreement the Interstate Stream Commission will receive water rights and funds from Intel in exchange for assuming part of Intel’s obligation to offset Rio Grande depletion impacts that result from Intel’s ground water pumping. The Interstate Stream Commission plans to meet that obligation using water that it has available to it, including water rights Intel will convey to them, relinquished Rio Grande Compact credits and other sources available to the Interstate Stream Commission.

“This proposed agreement will cut down transfer of water rights out of agriculture. It provides water and money to help with protection and insulation from potential endangered species act threats to water users. It ensures full offset of all future Intel stream depletions,” said Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López. “This agreement is good for New Mexico from many different perspectives.”

Under the terms of the agreement, the state would receive about 741 acre-feet of senior water rights that would ultimately be placed in the Strategic Water Reserve for ecological projects aimed at solving endangered species issues in the Middle Rio Grande. In addition, Intel will also provide \$1 million a year for 10 years, adjusted for inflation, for the Strategic Water Reserve and for dealing with endangered species issues on the Middle Rio Grande.

The Interstate Stream Commission is charged with doing any and all things necessary to protect, conserve and develop the waters of the state including managing New Mexico’s rights and obligations under eight interstate stream compacts and planning for future water uses.

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