



SENATOR V. DOMENICI  
NEW MEXICO

COMMITTEES:  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
BUDGET  
INDIAN AFFAIRS

SJ-17

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3101

April 7, 2004

Governor Bill Richardson  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor Richardson:

This letter is to confirm and expand upon our recent conversation regarding the three New Mexico water settlements pending action before Congress: Aamodt, Navajo/Gallup, and Gila.

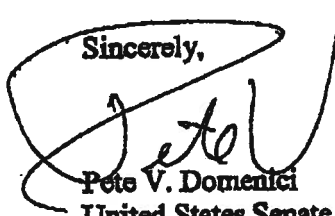
As you well know, the water situation in New Mexico has reached a critical level. In order to allocate our water resources reliably and judiciously, we first must need to determine each interested parties rightful water allocation. Our ability to take this critical step toward water planning has been hindered by our state's numerous pending water rights settlements. These prolonged disputes have pitted the state, municipalities, and private landholders against one another and have resulted in prolonged and costly litigation. Senator Bingaman and I have been working in good faith and with varying degrees of progress to address these three major water settlements.

In order to best proceed with resolving these long-standing disputes, I suggest that we look at the settlements collectively instead of singularly and work with all members of the delegation in a unified and coordinated manner. I request that you and the rest of the New Mexico delegation join me in a bi-partisan manner to address these problems. While each member of Congress has different interests, my sincere hope is that we can meet and discuss this approach.

I stand ready to host a meeting here in Washington, DC or in New Mexico at everyone's earliest convenience to discuss how we can best approach this pressing problem.

Resolving these water disputes is an indispensable component of addressing our state's water woes. I hope you will give my request every consideration and I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,



Pete V. Domenici  
United States Senate

cc: Senator Jeff Bingaman  
Representative Heather Wilson  
Representative Steve Pearce  
Representative Tom Udall

AS Let talk soon  
bw