



State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
STATE CAPITOL
Santa Fe

October 10, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Thomson
Chair
Water Quality Control Commission
New Mexico Environment Department
1190 St. Francis Drive, Suite N4050
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Re: WQCC No. 25-34, *In the Matter of Proposed Amendments to 20.6.8 NMAC – Ground and Surface Water Protection – Supplemental Requirements for Reuse of Treated Produced Water*

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Commission:

As members of the New Mexico House Republican Caucus, we submit this letter in strong support of advancing the responsible treatment and reuse of produced water under Docket No. 25-34.

We represent communities across New Mexico, including the southeast and northwest corners of the state, where oil and gas development is a cornerstone of the economy and where produced water treatment and reuse will most directly take place. These are our home districts. We know the families, the schools, the ranchers, the small business owners, and the workers who depend on responsible resource development to sustain their livelihoods. When we speak in support of produced water reuse, it is not abstract policy. It is about the future of the very communities we serve.

Too often, we have seen distant voices from places like Santa Fe attempt to dominate the conversation about energy and water. While every community in New Mexico deserves to be heard, it is not acceptable for well-off communities far removed from oil and gas operations to dictate the future of regions they do not live in and will not be accountable to. The people of Southeast and Northwest New Mexico live every day with the realities of water scarcity, drought restrictions, and the responsibility of meeting interstate compact obligations. They are the ones who call our offices when wells run low, when rivers dwindle, or when water restrictions strain households and farms. They should not be silenced or overshadowed by those who claim to care about the environment while opposing projects that would actually improve it.

At the same time, we recognize that every region of New Mexico faces its own unique challenges — from water supply to wildfire recovery to economic diversification — and we all strive to support one another in those efforts. No one understands these challenges more than the local leaders and representatives who live in those regions, work with their constituents daily, and shoulder the responsibility of moving their communities forward. For that reason, it is essential that the state trust these leaders and the local governments on the front lines, and ensure that their positions and perspectives carry weight in policy decisions. Their experience with scarcity and resilience should guide how New Mexico approaches these difficult but necessary choices.

The truth is simple: produced water reuse is reclamation. It is cleanup. It is taking something that has long been treated as waste and upcycling it into a resource. This is an environmental project as much as an economic one. By treating produced water responsibly, we can reduce the strain on fresh water, protect our aquifers, and create cleaner outcomes for everyone. Opposing these projects on ideological grounds does nothing to help frontline communities. On the contrary, it prevents rural New Mexicans from pursuing solutions that directly benefit them.

New Mexico has no new water resources waiting to be discovered. We face a future of hard choices unless we develop innovative sources like produced water. Every year we wait, costs rise for families, for farmers, and for local governments. Meanwhile, our neighbors in Texas are already moving ahead. They are cleaning and reusing produced water while New Mexico hesitates. Even worse, we are literally shipping truckloads of produced water across the border into Texas to be disposed of or treated there. That means we lose the water, the jobs, and the economic benefits, while Texans reap the rewards. New Mexico should not accept being left behind.

The responsible reuse of produced water will also help us meet our binding water compact obligations. These agreements are not optional. When New Mexico falls short, it is local communities — not distant policymakers — who pay the price. Reuse projects can provide a new pathway to meet these obligations while easing the burden on our rivers and aquifers. This is not just common sense; it is fiscal and environmental responsibility.

We are committed to ensuring that this work is done responsibly. Produced water reuse must be transparent, guided by science, and overseen with strong environmental safeguards. Communities must be full partners in the process, and no project should move forward without collaboration and accountability. But responsibility does not mean paralysis. We cannot allow fear or politics to prevent us from even examining the possibilities.

Our message is clear: New Mexico needs to pursue produced water reuse as a serious part of its water future. We call on the Water Quality Control Commission to hold hearings in the regions most directly affected, ensuring that local voices — the people who live with the reality of water scarcity — are heard first and foremost. Just as the Legislature holds interim

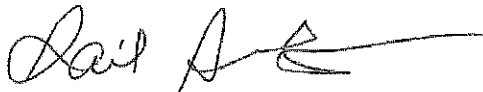
committee meetings in communities across the state so that those outside Santa Fe can be heard, so too should the Commission ensure that its process is not Santa Fe-centric. At a minimum, hearings should be conducted in the areas where produced water reuse would actually take place, with the possibility of multiple hearings to capture the full range of local perspectives. These are the communities most directly impacted, and they deserve the same opportunity to participate in shaping policy as those who live closer to the Roundhouse.

We reject the idea that outside interests or media narratives should stifle these conversations. Policy must be built in partnership with those who bear the consequences.

New Mexico's story has always been one of resilience. From acequias to ranching to energy development, we have adapted to scarcity with innovation and cooperation. Produced water reuse belongs in that tradition. It represents not only a chance to protect our environment, but also to strengthen our economy, meet our obligations, and preserve our communities for generations to come.

We, the members of the New Mexico House Republican Caucus, stand united in support of exploring this opportunity with seriousness, transparency, and resolve. For the sake of our constituents and for the future of New Mexico, it is time to act.

Respectfully submitted,



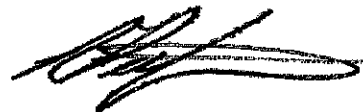
Gail Armstrong
House Republican Leader
House District 49



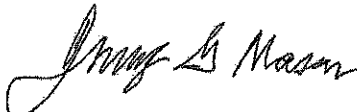
Alan T. Martinez
House Republican Whip
House District 23



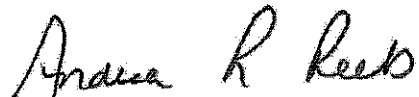
Rebecca Dow
House Republican Caucus Chair
House District 38



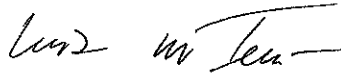
Randall T. Pettigrew
State Representative
House District 61



Jimmy G. Mason
State Representative
House District 66



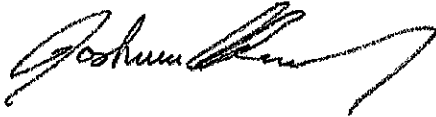
Andrea R. Reeb
State Representative
House District 64



Luis M. Terrazas
State Representative
House District 39



Harlan Vincent
State Representative
House District 56



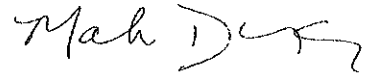
Joshua N. Hernandez
State Representative
House District 60



Rod Montoya
State Representative
House District 1



Jennifer Jones
State Representative
House District 32



Mark Duncan
State Representative
House District 2



Elaine Sena Cortez
State Representative
House District 62



Jonathan A. Henry
State Representative
House District 54



Nicole Chavez
State Representative
House District 31



Cathrynn Novich Brown
State Representative
House District 55



William A. Hall II
State Representative
House District 3



Jack Chattfield
State Representative
House District 67



John Block
State Representative
House District 51



Brian G. Baca
State Representative
House District 8



Tanya Mirabal Moya
State Representative
House District 7



Martin Zamora
State Representative
House District 63



Catherine J. Cullen
State Representative
House District 57



Stephanie Lord
State Representative
House District 22



Angelita Mejia
State Representatives
House District 58



Mark B. Murphy
State Representative
House District 59