



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS TX 75202-2733

DEC 23 2011

Mr. Dave Martin
Secretary
New Mexico Environment Department
1190 Saint Francis Drive
PO Box 5469
Santa Fe, NM 87502

Re: Review of the New Mexico's 2011 Consolidated Water Quality Management Plan and Continuing Planning Process Documents

Dear Mr. Martin:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed New Mexico's 2011 Consolidated Water Quality Management Plan and Continuing Planning Process (WQMP/CPP) transmitted to Miguel Flores on June 6, 2011. We are approving your consolidated WQMP/CPP, but we do have some comments we would like you to consider (attached) as we move forward.

We appreciate the work your staff has put into this effort. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me, or have your staff contact Larry Giglio at 214-665-6639 or via e-mail at giglio.larry@epa.gov.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William K. Honker".

William K. Honker, P.E.
Acting Director
Water Quality Protection Division

Enclosure

cc w/enclosure: Mr. James Bearzi - New Mexico Environment Department
Ms. Pam Homer - New Mexico Environment Department

Consolidated Water Quality Management Plan and Continuing Planning Process Documents

EPA Recommendations

Process for Review of CWA §101(a)(2) Use Designations

The consolidated WQMP/_CPP does not contain a clear process for the re-examination of waters that do not include uses specified in CWA §101(a)(2). The consolidated WQMP/_CPP can be strengthened by a process to both identify and re-evaluate waters that do not specify CWA §101(a)(2) uses. The revised WQMP/_CPP shows the primary pathways to identifying or modifying applicable water quality standards after an evaluation of a water body, but it does not make a distinction between perennial waters and those that are effluent-impacted/dominated. Over time, naturally ephemeral and very low hydroperiods waters with augmented flow tend to develop expanded habitat which require protection.