

**NEWS RELEASE***For Immediate Release***March 12, 2024**

*The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.*

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**Strategic Water Supply Request for Information closes on March 31, 2024**

*State seeking input from wide range of stakeholders*

**SANTA FE** — The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) related to developing a Strategic Water Supply to further the expansion of clean energy and advanced manufacturing investments closes on March 31, 2024. The department reminds stakeholders from industry, financial, and academic institutions to submit responses to the RFI prior to the deadline, as this information will shape a state solicitation for proposals later this year.

NMED issued the RFI on Jan. 19, 2024, which initiated significant interest from private sector companies, financial institutions, research universities and more. To date, the department has had 138 individuals sign up to our mailing list on this topic. Since the RFI opened, NMED has had over 125 engagements with parties interested in the RFI through two virtual group meetings and 25 individual stakeholder meetings.

“Produced water and brackish water have the potential to be game-changers in our state as temperatures rise and water becomes more scarce,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “New Mexico has a strong record of protecting water resources while fostering water reuse. Establishing the Strategic Water Supply is a core component of our 50-Year Water Action Plan to protect consumers while supporting a thriving economy during the clean energy transition. We will rely on the expert input received through this Request for Information and other stakeholder engagement as we build the SWS based on sound science and robust economic analysis.”

While the New Mexico legislature did not appropriate the \$500 million sought by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in two installments of \$250 million per year for two years, the administration will continue to solicit investments to treat brackish and produced waters for clean energy and advanced manufacturing projects. In doing so, New Mexico will continue to expand its economy while preserving freshwater resources for community drinking water.

“New Mexico will see greater investment to scale brackish and produced water treatment in 2024 given advancements in science by research institutions like New Mexico State University and innovation by the private sector” said **Environment Department Cabinet Secretary James Kenney**. “Clean energy and advanced manufacturing can expand without the reliance of our limited freshwater resources.”

“The Governor’s Strategic Water Supply initiative provides an opportunity to create innovation for the safe development of brackish aquifers as a source of water that can serve the growth of renewable energy

and other industries,” says **State Engineer Mike Hamman**, “Preparing our state for a secure water future in the face of increased aridity requires a multi-pronged approach that includes investigating deep brackish aquifers and other reuse sources for development to help preserve fresh water where possible.”

Once the RFI closes, NMED will compile the responses and make the information available to the public in May. Throughout the summer and fall, state agencies will continue to engage stakeholders and state legislators on the Strategic Water Supply. The Administration will draw on the RFI responses and other stakeholder input to determine the best approach to advance the Strategic Water Supply during the 2025 legislative session.

“The Strategic Water Supply program is a forward-looking approach to build climate and economic resilience for New Mexico,” said **Rob Black, President & CEO, New Mexico Chamber of Commerce**. “It is focused on driving innovation and investment into areas that will shape the future of the western United States as water becomes a more scarce resource over the next several decades.”

“The Request for Information for the Strategic Water Supply will help lay out a detailed and comprehensive strategy and associated actions and schedule to drive improved stewardship of New Mexico’s fresh and non-traditional water resources that assure fresh-water sustainability, economic growth, and protection of environmental and public health and safety for communities across New Mexico,” said **John D’Antonio Jr. P.E., President NM Desalination Association**. “Desalination in New Mexico has always been a possible solution to augment water shortages but slow to develop because of low investment and limited commitment from state leaders.”

“New Mexico State University, through the New Mexico Produced Water Research Consortium, is prepared to support the Governor’s Strategic Water Supply initiative with research focused on effective treatment of alternative water resources that ensures public health is protected while seeking development, testing, and evaluation of fit-for-purpose industrial applications.” said **Dr. Luis Cifuentes, Vice President for Research, Creativity and Economic Development at New Mexico State University**.

Additional information about the Strategic Water Supply is available [here](#). Stakeholders wanting to remain informed about the Strategic Water Supply can join our listserv on this topic [here](#).

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