

# Water and Natural Resources Committee

## Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force: Progress and Priorities

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# Task Force Overview

- 29 Member Task Force convened June – Dec 2022
  - 20 Citizen Members Reps including:  
ag, municipal and domestic users, Tribes, Pueblos and Nations, acequia communities, environmental advocates, oil and gas industry, philanthropy, and academic and research institutions
  - 9 State Agency Reps
- Plus:
  - 9 Legislative Advisors
  - Organizational and Technical Support from NM First and Utton Center at UNM
- Key Objective:
  - Develop recommendations to address water policy and infrastructure needs given current challenges, including identifying long-term solutions
- Report released December 2022
  - See [nmwater.org](http://nmwater.org) for full report
- *Consensus Based Process*

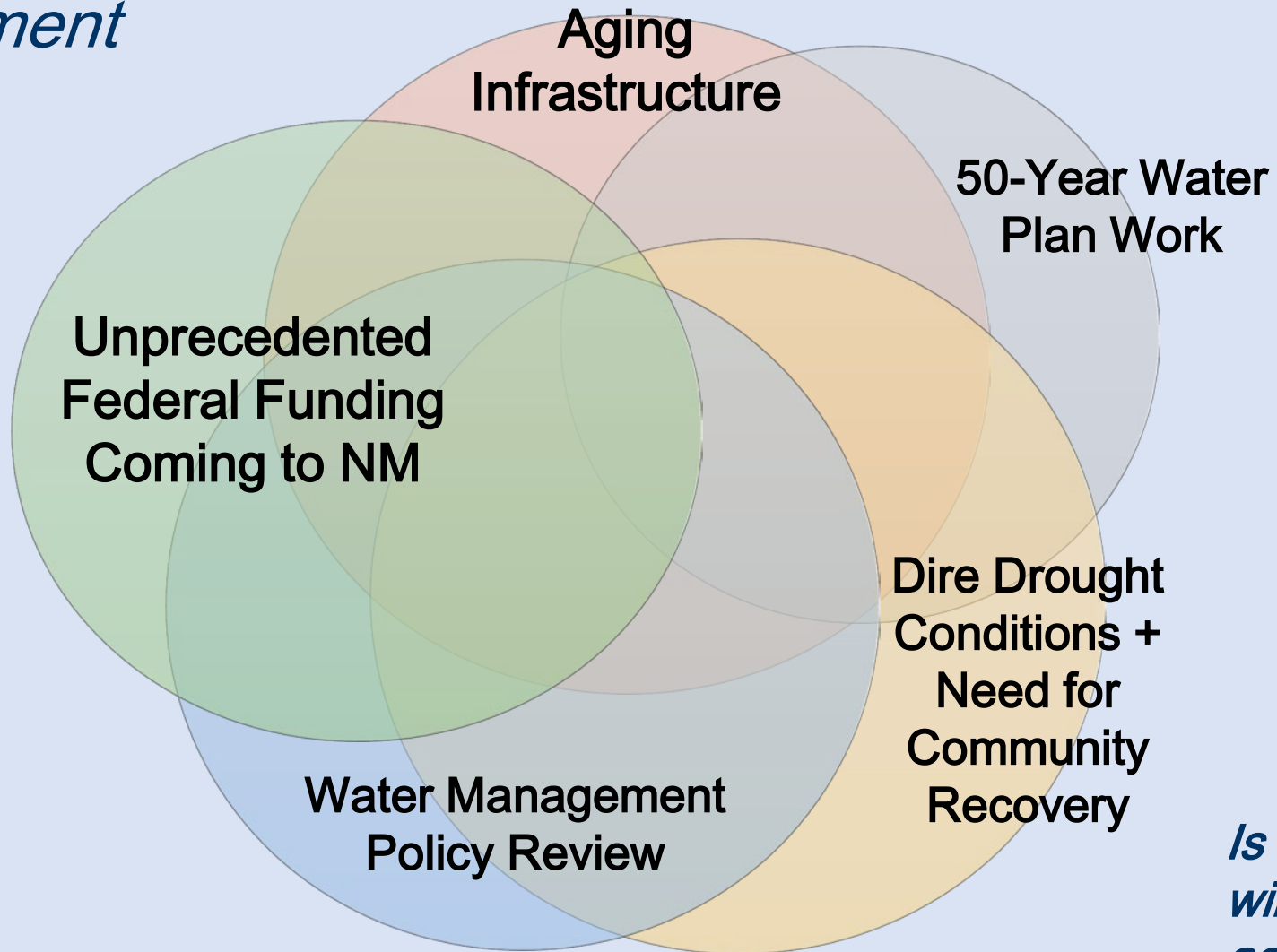


# Major Problems Facing New Mexico's Water Resources in the Coming Decades

- Persistent drought being exacerbated by rising average annual temperatures
- Catastrophic wildfires resulting from watersheds devastated by drought
- Declining aquifers resulting from reduced surface water supplies
- Aging water and wastewater infrastructure, hitting rural systems hardest
- Need for stormwater control investments as intense monsoon events rise
- Lack of consistent funding for proper human capacity development at all levels of government and the private sector
- Need for long-view planning and investment to correct years of under-funding

*We are already seeing these changes.*

*Once in a lifetime  
moment*



*Is there a  
willingness to  
act?*

# Water Task Force Final Recommendations

## Three Self-Formed Workgroups

- Community Drinking Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Capacity, Infrastructure, and Finance
  - *5 recommendations*
- Water Resources Management and Planning
  - *8 recommendations*
- River, Aquifer, and Watershed Health
  - *4 recommendations*

## In total

- *17 recommendations* with broad to 100% Task Force support







# 2023 Legislative Outcomes

## SB 337 – Water Security Planning Act

- Transforms regional water planning

## SB 1 – Regional Water System Resiliency

- Supports capacity building at local level

## Funding for the Strategic Water Reserve

- \$7.5 million special appropriation for FY24

## Water Leaders Workshops

- Funding to NM Tech for decision maker education

## SB 176 – Acequia Fund for Disaster Response

- Support disaster recovery response

## SB 9 Create Legacy Permanent Fund

## HB 195 Forest Conservation Act Amendments

## SB 206 Forestry Division Procurement Exempt.

- Support management of upland watersheds

## Unprecedented Funding Overall to OSE/ISC

- Particularly for Lower and Middle Rio Grande



# Water Security Planning Act – SB 337

*Passed unanimously.* Will transform and reinvigorate regional water planning in New Mexico.

*Resilience = the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from disruptions.*

## Next Steps:

- Rulemaking and guidelines
- Need for robust public involvement
- Formation of a Tribal Advisory Council
- *All-hands-on-deck moment*





# Water Security Planning Act

New statute requires that regional water planning will:

- Ensure scientific integrity through the best available data, science and models
- Support implementation through prioritization of projects and activities, and reporting mechanisms for decision-makers
- Build on and incorporate existing planning efforts, and not be redundant
- Be grounded in state water law, including respecting existing water rights and the doctrine of prior appropriation
- Develop local capacity through increased and more consistent support
- Involve robust public engagement every step of the way

*Implementation of effective solutions requires engagement from local communities.*



# Next Steps

What's needed looking toward the 2024 and 2025 sessions?

## Momentum on:

- Funding mechanisms for water infrastructure
- Federal funding - ensuring NM takes full advantage of currently available \$\$
- Groundwater data and management
- State and local capacity development
- Supporting water planning next steps

## More...

- OSE Enforcement Bill
- Water Data Act implementation





# Time to take action toward a resilient water future!

