

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DRINKING WATER BUREAU OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND THE OFFICE OF THE STATE ENGINEER TO COOPERATE WITH THE NEW MEXICO FINANCE AUTHORITY TO FIND SOLUTIONS FOR RURAL WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE PROBLEMS.

WHEREAS, rural water users throughout New Mexico are experiencing significant problems associated with aging water systems and drought conditions; and

WHEREAS, many systems that provide life-sustaining water to citizens of New Mexico have had difficulty receiving assistance by the drinking water bureau of the department of environment; and

WHEREAS, federal money is available to match state-financed improvement projects for rural systems, but is subject to approval by the drinking water bureau of the department of environment; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico finance authority is prepared to provide assistance to rural water users, but cannot without action by the drinking water bureau and the office of the state engineer; and

WHEREAS, the office of the state engineer's review of water rights as a condition of approved financing has resulted in denial of rural water users' water rights and financing for improvements to those systems; and

WHEREAS, continued frustration of rural water users' needs is resulting in a health as well as economic impact to these citizens of New Mexico;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the drinking water bureau of the department of environment and the office of the state engineer be requested to expedite assistance to rural water users and to cooperate with the New Mexico finance authority in carrying out the statutory duties of the department of environment and the state engineer to support water system improvements and to administer water rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of environment and the state engineer report to the legislative council by June 1, 2001 on the progress in expediting financing of rural water system improvements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of environment and to the state engineer.