

Governor announces 50-year water action plan

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SANTA FE — Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham unveiled a water action plan at the State Capitol on Jan. 30 with the goal of ensuring New Mexicans will have access to clean water for the next five decades.

As one of the driest states in the west, New Mexico is no stranger to drought. Almost three-fourths of the state is currently experiencing severe to exceptional drought conditions. In 50 years, water experts predict the state will have 25% less water to use. Without decisive action, New Mexicans would have to dramatically alter their way of life to adjust to a bleak water reality.

Understanding this fact, the Lujan Grisham administration -- with the help of leading scientists, hydrologists, geologists, and researchers -- created a 50-Year Water Action Plan to safeguard the state's most precious resource for future generations.

"New Mexicans throughout the State need to take actions now to ensure we can have resilient water supplies in the future. The 50-Year Water Action Plan elements are guided by science and innovation to ensure that our diverse communities and economies will continue to thrive," Lujan Grisham said.

Taking into consideration vital input from nations, tribes, pueblos, acequias, farmers, and other stakeholders, the 50-Year Water Action Plan focuses on expanding water conservation in cities

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and on farms, developing new water supplies and enhancing water quality protections.

“Thanks to the Governor for prioritizing water issues through the 50-Year Water Action Plan and developing a proactive plan for helping New Mexicans respond to the challenges of climate change. By working with partners at the Federal level, the State will be able to protect its water resources for generations to come,” Rep. Melanie Stansbury, D-N.M., said.

Key provisions of the 50-Year Water Plan include:

A water education campaign to reduce community water consumption by 10%.

Expanding water conservation by incentivizing modern irrigation technology to reduce agricultural water use by 20%.

Deploying cutting-edge technology to complete a statewide water loss inventory.

Creating billions of gallons of new water for use for clean energy manufacturing via the Strategic Water Supply.

A new surface water discharge permitting program to keep rivers, streams, and lakes clean.

Investing in reforestation and managing forests to protect water supplies and reduce the threat of wildfires.

“The Governor’s 50-Year Water Action Plan builds upon existing work at NMED and other Agencies to prioritize actions that will increase water conservation, develop new sources of supply and strengthen water quality and watershed protections,” Environment Secretary James Kenney said.

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