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For immediate release:

April 24, 2014

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(Santa Fe) -The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) has initiated public meetings within the 16 New Mexico water planning regions. The purpose of these meetings is two-fold: to provide information about the two-year regional and state water update process and to initiate the re-establishment of regional steering committees.

The first meeting of the Lower Rio Grande water planning region is scheduled in Las Cruces on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon at the Dona Ana County Commission Chambers, 845 North Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, NM.

The ISC together with the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) has developed a new approach that will build upon each region's previously accepted plans and focus on the current drought and other long-term planning issues, to identify key water issues and develop priorities, programs and projects to address those pressing needs.

The ISC/OSE will calculate current water supply and demand data and identify legal issues using a common data method. The ISC/OSE will also provide updated population projections and current economic forecasts, with input from the regions, to help estimate future water use. The ISC/OSE will provide a guide to legal and institutional issues affecting water supply and management. These elements comprise a "common technical platform" developed by the state for each region.

The planning team is meeting with representatives and other interested stakeholders of the state's 16 planning regions to discuss the process of the updates that will occur over the next two years. This first year focuses on updating the technical data and forming functional and representative regional steering committees. The second year will focus on completing the regional plans that identify programs, policies, and projects that will best serve the needs of each region.

(MORE)

Representative steering committees strengthen the planning process, as it ensures that all water management entities within the region are represented and that individuals with extensive knowledge about local water issues are included. The process will follow the [Updated Regional Water Planning Handbook: Guidelines to Preparing Updates to New Mexico Regional Water Plans \(December 2013\)](#).

“Regional water plans reflect the goals and values of each region’s water issues,” said Interstate Stream Director Estevan López. “We are grateful for the work done in the past. Our challenge now is to ensure that these plans can be implemented as intended by each region. The updated regional water planning program will importantly outline Water Trust Board priorities and other funding applications, allowing the regions to turn their plans into a reality.”

For more information, visit [Water Trust Board’s funding and application criteria](#). The summary of the ISC water planning program and process is available at:

http://www.ose.state.nm.us/Planning/SWP/SWP&RWP_Recommended%20ApproachAlt1_09-03-2013re2.pdf

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