

*Straight Talk - Our Water is Over-Allocated*

**Impacts of Over Allocation on Local Government**



**Panel:**

Commissioner Teresa Córdova - Bernalillo County (not in photo)

Councilor Debbie O'Malley - City of Albuquerque

Councilor Terese Ulivarri - City of Belen

David Gensler - MRG Conservancy District

**Note:**

**Janet Jarratt:** We are going to change the order on your agenda just slightly. We have a panel later of primarily elected officials talking about local entity impacts of the over-allocation issue. We're very fortunate to have a number of those folks here today, but one of them has a conflict, and we're going to take her out of order.

**Teresa Cordova—Bernalillo County Commission**

*Bernalillo County Commissioner Teresa Cordova represents District Two, and begins her first term with extensive experience working with residents and community leaders to identify issues and deliver solutions in the South Valley. A professor in Community and Regional Planning at*

*the University of New Mexico, she has taught classes in land use, economic development, and community-based planning since 1991. Through UNM, she directs the Resource Center for Raza Planning, a student group of planning and policy analysts. She received a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkley, is the recipient of the YWCA "Woman on the Move" Award, and is an Outstanding South Valley citizen. She also served on the Unification Charter Commission, and was former president of the Rio Grande Community Development Corporation. Among her Commission appointments is her seat on the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority.*

Let me apologize for the fact that I do have to leave. We have a dedication down in the South Valley. We're opening up a brand new swimming pool, speaking of water, in the Los Padillas neighborhood, and we're dedicating it to Representative Kiki Saavedra. We're very excited about that. We even have some Los Padillas residents here, who are going to stay for the Water Assembly, to protect the water. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you. I want to congratulate all of you for taking time out of your Saturday to be here. We know that water is such a huge issue, and I know that so many of you have also been part of the Water Assembly for several years, so it's really great to see all of you. Actually I'm disappointed I won't be on the panel. I looked forward to being on the panel with Counselor O'Malley and with the other folks, and to have a nice discussion about the issues of policy as it relates to water. But what I'm going to do is not take my full eight minutes and just go ahead and make a couple of comments to highlight a few points.

One of the things that Janet mentioned is that as a professor of planning, I also deal with land use issues, and I want to just state the obvious—how important it is that as we talk about water, we also need to be thinking about our land use policies. So many of the land use decisions we make, we're making without thinking about the water. So I think as policy makers, we want to do more and more to do that. That's certainly something that we're doing in the South Valley, but if you look at places like our southwest mesa and the certainly west side, water isn't always a consideration. The more you all do to press on the land use issues and to bring water into those land use decisions, that's something that I think is really important.

Another important point I want to make, as we go through these next—this stage and this era of trying to deal with our water situation, and the role that you all take in pushing these issues: remember that we have some really historic water rights here that we want to think about and want to make sure we protect. We don't want to lose that because so much of what makes New Mexico New Mexico is our rich historical tradition. We've had the Pueblos here and I know the Pueblos are a very important part of the strategy, but in addition to that, from the land grant to think about—how do we protect the ditches, how do we protect our acequias, how do we protect the water rights of some of our folks, and to that extent I think it really becomes important for the State Engineer to adjudicate some of those water rights for us.

A third point I want to emphasize has to do with the regional aspect here. I know that the whole approach you all are taking is that needs to be a regional consideration. I want to urge us to really think regional here, and as we do that, not to target any particular jurisdiction, or not to target any particular groups of users, but to really think about this in a holistic way because most definitely as you well know and have even said here this morning, the river is a very integrated

system and besides all the legal issues, there are always ecological issues as well that make it a very integrated system. Certainly we need to hold the Albuquerque metropolitan area accountable, and the Water Authority has very much taken on that responsibility, in terms of return flow credits, in terms of conservation measures, in terms of stopping the drainage of the aquifer by bringing in the new water source. Those are all the kinds of things the Albuquerque metropolitan area is doing through the Water Authority, and I think it is important that we hold the metropolitan area accountable. But if we only focus on the Albuquerque metropolitan area as the number one culprit, we're not looking at some of the surrounding issues that we need to attend to, whether it be Rio Rancho for example, whether it be some of the other metro areas. As was said earlier by the Governor of Santo Domingo, we need to look at the dumping that goes on further upstream; we need to look at Rio Rancho in terms of the deficit, with respect to the water credit. So we can't just look at Albuquerque and not look at Rio Rancho, we can't just look at Albuquerque and not look at what goes on upstate and downstate and so on. My point being not—certainly not—that Albuquerque metropolitan area shouldn't be made accountable, but that I think we need to make *everybody* accountable with the same standards, and so to truly see this as a regional effort, and to really broaden that as we look at the community, or at this issue, speaking of the Rio Grande as an integrated system.

Then with respect to this point about not targeting particular users, I think I may be speaking to the choir, but again, one of the things that you hear a lot of times is that we blame agricultural use as the reason we are losing water here. I think it really becomes important that we protect agricultural interests in the state, not only for its function in replenishing the aquifer, but as it relates to all kinds of issues—as it relates to food supply, and certainly as it relates to land-based cultures, on which New Mexico has been built.

I think that something else you all can do is to put pressure on the various government entities, including—and I'm sorry I'm not going to get to speak directly with the conservancy district folks—but I think it becomes very important what we do with the conservancy district, or what the conservancy district does with the water. That evaporation issue that was up there earlier as a big water source? One of the things we can do is stop lining our ditches with concrete. I think we're losing a lot of water that way, when instead, we should be letting that water seep back in, so if we can get the conservancy to start thinking differently about the ditches and stop lining those ditches that may be something that I think can also go a long way.

And finally, let me just close by saying how important cooperation is, not only governmental cooperation, but the cooperation that exists between the government and its citizens. I think one of the great things about the Water Assembly is the pro-active way in which you're thinking about these issues. You definitely want to think about it in an integrated way, and definitely want to think about it long term, and you don't want to wait until we're in such a crisis situation when our options are much more limited. So I congratulate all of you for not only being here today, but for all the work that you do with the Water Assembly, and I continue to offer my support in my role on the Water Utilities Authority. So thank you for the opportunity to address you and for letting me sneak into this part of the agenda, and I apologize that I'm going to have to leave. I'm very much pleased to have been able to be here.

## Panel

### Terese Ulivarri—Councilor, City of Belen

*Belen City Councilor Terese Ulivarri grew up in and around Belen, and has been a councilor since 1998. Retired from New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Department after 25 years, she has a degree in Outdoor Recreation from UNM. She chairs the Mid-Region Council of Governments' Water Resources Board and worked on the Regional Water Plan. She serves on the Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Policy & Advocacy Committee of the National League of Cities.*

I wanted to start out by trying to give you an overview of where I live—Belen, New Mexico. I was born there, raised there, I hope I die there, and that's how dedicated I am to being in Belen. I have made myself available to a lot of issues going on in the region, not just Belen itself, and so with that, we've started communicating within the County, not just isolating ourselves. The City of Belen, Los Lunas, Bosque Farms, Valencia County have all gotten together and we're starting to discuss regional issues within Valencia County and so that is helping us understand the impact that a big city has, not just our own little towns.

I just have a couple of more things I'd like to address real quickly that we do in the City of Belen that have impacts on allocations of water. The City has taken on a big project with regard to providing wastewater infrastructure. We actually underwrote a mandate by the federal government because a lot of our water and sewer lines hadn't been touched for fifty years. We did a water survey and a wastewater survey of all our pipes. We actually found some pipe that was no longer there. The water was still flowing through it. I don't know if you're aware of the toxic gasses that are formed when you have wastewater lines and they—believe it or not—eat concrete, so if you tap into a line and find it's not there, you know you're impacting the whole valley. That's your groundwater. When it rained, we were actually starting to treat rainwater at our sewage treatment plant because the water was getting into the lines. So we were doing a lot more than we needed to, monetarily, for treatment. Instead of going to the river, [rainwater] went through our treatment plant first, and then to the river. So that's been alleviated. Our major problems have been fixed.

So the City of Belen in the last five years has put more money underground than above ground. The citizens don't really care about that until their bathroom fills up with sewage. If it didn't impact them directly, they want to know, 'Where's our money going?' And so we've done a lot of publications and news releases to inform the public what's going on in our city.

A big concern right now is new development. I want you to know the City of Belen will not incorporate any new development until they have acquired water rights; we don't just take people on. We're trying to have infill happen in our town, as opposed to new development. You've heard of Sun Ranch, probably. For the City of Belen, that will be a big impact. It will double the land base within the city when it does come on board. But we're not touching it until they find the water rights. You have to have that before people come on board.

We've gone to replacing all our water meters with electrically read water meters. We've found that like anything else, if you don't take care of it, it starts to fall apart on you. Some of those meters hadn't been read—we've actually had people call up and say, "You haven't read my meter in fifteen years." So we go out and sure enough, it's buried under five inches of dirt, and we know we haven't read that thing in a long time. So it's impacting not only what's used, but also, we're not getting the money we should be getting for their use of the water.

With their water bills we give them tips on conservation. Every time they get a water bill, there are water conservation tips incorporated in there. We're right now working on our water conservation plan. That's going to go to the public for review, and we'll have that online in the fall. So we're doing as much as we can for the small city that we are. Believe it or not we only have 6,700 people within the city limits but we support a community of 35,000 surrounding us. That's a big impact. So any time you build a facility—we just put in a multi-purpose park in the last ten years, building it gradually. We have soccer fields that need water, we have softball fields that need to be watered, we have a community center off site that will come on line in August, and it's not just for our citizens within the city limits, but we support the surrounding community. We have people all the time asking us, "We need more fields," and they have to stop and think, do they live in the city or outside the city? So demand is great for what we offer our citizens and people who like within the surrounding communities.

We're emphasizing water use within the city. We're sending out a survey on how much is being used so we can give our citizens an idea of what their impact is on water use within the city. The big thing in my head is it's not just the City of Belen anymore; we've got to look at regional—I'm looking regional just within Valencia County. That's a lot of people, a big population, and that's a lot of impact on groundwater, not just by citizens—you've got your bird poop going into the water—but you also have what's in the valley. I love the agriculture; I grew up kind of on a farm (my grandfather's hobby farm about three miles from Belen) but [?] the cattle industry is doing and what those [?] need to do to keep the groundwater safe. There's a lot of influences and a lot of different things going on that impact our water. Just know that we are concerned about what's going on and we're not being isolationists. We want to be part of what's going on throughout the region.

### **Debbie O'Malley—Councilor, City of Albuquerque**

*Albuquerque City Councilor Debbie O'Malley was born in Albuquerque, where her family has lived for several generations. She is a founder and former executive director for the Sawmill Community Land Trust, a not for profit community development corporation, dedicated to reserving and maintaining permanently affordable housing for low to moderate income families. Debbie and her husband have two grown daughters, April and Kristy, and reside in the North Valley. Representing District 2, her committee appointments include Land Use, Planning & Zoning. She was formerly on the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority.*

I'm the City Councilor for District 2, which is a very big part of the North Valley and a little bit of the northeast heights. It's a wonderful district to represent, and that's where I grew up as well. My family always lived in Old Town—my dad's family. My mom's from a little town not very

far from Belen—Veguita. We had a farm down there. So I'm very connected to the valley communities and as a result I feel very, very fortunate to represent them fairly, as much as possible.

I learned a lot this morning. It makes me aware of how much I *don't* know about water in the region. I'm still not clear about 'allocation' versus 'appropriation' but I'm sure I'll get some information about that later.

I just want to echo some of the comments that were made earlier by different folks. The thing that's very important to valley residents is the agricultural part of the north valley, and the acequia system. That's very, very much a part of our history—our cultural history—and that's why when I hear things, largely from the development industry, that it's the agricultural users that are sucking up the water and therefore [development deserves] more, I don't know if they can *get* any more. [?] something the Governor of Santo Domingo Pueblo touched on, and that is—I'll just give you a little story. We moved to a little subdivision that was built in the '30s, very close to Fourth Street, like right before the freeway came in, about three minutes from downtown. Right next to our house was an acequia. There were acequias running all through the North Valley. Of course, they're all closed up now but it was a wonderful, wonderful experience, living next to it because it provided a slice of the natural world for urban dwellers that you wouldn't otherwise have. Here was a ditch that was full of wildlife. Turtles came into the yard, and you know, you just don't see that anymore. I still live next to an acequia, and I'm up there every now and then. It's pretty shallow most of the time. But I have never seen wildlife like that, ever again. That connectedness is a part of [?] spiritual connections that we have [?] for our children and our grandchildren. So I think that's very, very important.

I was very pleased to hear about [?] We've got a problem with dog poop, so we can put out a thing about that, but the real problem is growth, I mean how long are we going to [?] these kinds of actions, the awareness, the education, the overlapping that takes place from the public. That's where we start the political [?] when we get the pressure from the public. You can't just sit back and say the stuff that you always say. [?] It's really tough and hard [?] and it provides a lot of gross receipts tax to Albuquerque, so we've got to make some changes, no doubt about it.

I think it's important to continue to have these kinds of educational seminars and that the public really starts to put pressure on—political pressure—on us to really do something about this problem. I've been asked many times, "Why aren't you addressing this issue? What are you going to do, wait until we turn on the tap and there's nothing there?" and I say, "I think that's what we're going to do." Unfortunately that's what it's going to come to—when you turn on the tap and there's no water. Nobody's willing to do any long term planning and really look at the issues.

### **David Gensler—Hydrologist, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District**

*David Gensler is a hydrologist and has been with the District for a decade. He says, "The MRGCD, for those who may not know, provides many valuable benefits to the residents of the river valley, some of which are more apparent than others. Many local residents may not realize*

*the amount of constant maintenance that the flood control facilities require. Agricultural production on Conservancy lands is estimated to generate \$35 to \$70 million per year. Also, the continued presence of farming in the middle valley gives the area a unique rural/urban environmental and social mix. Here, a greenbelt of small farms, irrigated lands, and a variety of pastures and gardens within the city and township limits help temper the contemporary, urban landscapes. In the future, the MRGCD will continue to maintain the Rio Grande's irrigation and flood control facilities while encouraging the preservation and growth of the bosque. Through active monitoring and scientific research, the Conservancy is able to preserve and protect the majestic Rio Grande, at the same time simultaneously supporting the continued urbanization and industrialization of the heart of New Mexico."*

Forgive me, I'm a last-minute sub today; Sterling Grogan was supposed to originally come and address you. But in any case, they asked me to do it and hopefully I'll be able to answer some questions.

Looking at the presentations we saw earlier, I wish I had known a little bit more—I would have loved to have prepared a presentation about the conservancy district and what's been happening for the last several years in terms of efficiency improvements and how we've dealt with the species pressures and organization pressures and the drought. We've made a lot of changes, particularly in the last five years. The actions the conservancy district started to take actually began just about the time the Water Assembly began. I believe I attended the first one of these in 1996, or '97. A lot has changed in that time. '96 and '97 is really when the conservancy district started to gear up and address efficiency problems. We initially started by building devices to measure how much water—of course everybody remembers those days back in '96 and the headlines all over the paper saying, "The Rio is dry and the minnow is dying and the farmers are diverting 12 feet per acre to water their crops." I like to go back to that scene because it's kind of humorous that somebody would actually think about taking delivery of a full twelve feet of water to put on an alfalfa field—it doesn't make much of a crop.

We have a good handle on how much water is going where now, and we've put in a lot of new structures and a lot of innovative new devices that enable us to function pretty successfully on less water. Our diversions last year were approximately 320,000 acre-feet of surface water, to deliver water to about 62,000 acres, which is a pretty efficient system, compared to the other irrigation districts around the country. Of that 320,000 acre-feet, a lot of it actually found its way back to the river. We start to look at diversions in terms of consumptive use and it's on the order of 150,000 acre-feet, maybe a little bit less.

So things have been changing. We've got a real interesting project that's just coming to bear fruit. Several years ago, the New Mexico Water Trust Board funded us to start automating some canals, start doing some supply-based automation in the canal system. We finished the first twelve miles or so of the Peralta Main Canal and it's kind of a neat thing to see, because all of a sudden, schedules work down that canal—the irrigators can actually get the water when it's promised to them because the head in the canal is maintained at a fixed elevation and it's working out pretty nicely. So we're making a lot of progress in terms of water savings in certain areas like this.

## Questions

The subject of this particular Assembly is the impact of over-allocation, and I'm hoping to get a lot of questions because it's something I don't really know a lot about. Does anybody want to start out and ask a question for any of us three?

*Yes, we heard earlier from our County Commissioner Terese Cordova about concreting the ditches...*

Gensler: Yes, we have started to look into concreting ditches and we've actually got a project starting this fall to line about two miles of the Peralta Main Canal. That's something that came out of pressures brought to bear on the district in those late 90s years. Everyone was saying the district needs to get more efficient, save water, operate with less water, and one of the ways to do that is to line ditches. This is about the third time here recently that I've heard people don't want to see lined ditches. So I'm kind of at a loss how to answer that because it's a little bit different from everything I've been hearing the last several years: you've got to get efficient, you've got to line.

*Well I think that efficiency is fine, but when you line a ditch with concrete, you have nothing going back into the aquifer.*

Gensler: That might be true to some extent. I think there are more critical impacts to lining than that, probably the loss of habitat and scenic issues. Even though you line a ditch, you're taking only a relatively small slice of the recharge away. It's probably the actual delivery on the part of the field that has much more impact to the recharge than leakage from the ditch.

*O'Malley: I have a question related to that. There's areas in the North Valley that are sinking, and one theory is that the ditches are lined with clay and if we don't keep them running, or years when it's been really dry the clay starts to [?] and that's adding to the collapse of various sections—*

Gensler: We have several respected hydrogeologists here in the audience who could probably answer that a lot better than me, but I think that what you're seeing here is probably a function of pumping the aquifer.

*O'Malley: This is kind of in the Candelaria-Fourth Street area, there's places that it's dropped like three or four feet.*

John Hawley: When I worked for the state and Mike Kernodle worked for USGS and we were doing a study for Albuquerque back in the early 90s, we got together with several homeowners in the area 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Candelaria and going north from there, some home owners had serious collapse and they allowed us to drill auger holes. It's pretty complex a terrain. A lot of that is parallel to the Second Street canal. At any rate, there are soil conditions that are really weird. San Felipe de Neri church sits on a—down twenty feet below the surface, there's a two-foot bed of wet peat that is just soaked and when the water table drops down below that level, that church is going to go down probably a foot. So it's a very complex issue, and we could talk privately, or



talk to the Commission about it. If you're selling your house you don't want the guy who's buying it to know you have a problem. So suddenly neighbors say well we don't want this neighborhood identified as one having a problem. You get into personal property issues and it's a real tough nut.

*I come from Corrales and the ditch that comes parallel to Loma Larga, it's significantly changed the amount of moisture in the ground beside that ditch. It has very much affected that area to a great degree. Everybody is saying we need to replenish the aquifer. Why in the world are you lining the ditches?*

Gensler: It's been the pressure. As far as that particular thing—the Loma Larga Project was done by the Village of Corrales.

*It was done by the Village of Corrales and it was [because of the] 'the pressure' but no one paid any attention to everything—you look at such a narrow point of view and not the whole picture.*

Gensler: They wanted that lined so they could get more right-of-way for the road. It had little to do with water savings.

*Well let me ask you this: how can we change that? Can it be changed?*

Gensler: Well, it's going to be very difficult to change as long as there's continued pressure to gain more water for other purposes. Somebody has to face up to the fact that this water that may be seeping from these ditches and is supporting these riparian communities and wildlife along the ditches in the North Valley and Corrales is something worthwhile and that we want to keep. It's a beneficial use of water and it's something that we want to spend water for. Right now, the emphasis is to recover the water from all these different places and move it somewhere else.

*In Corrales, that ditch that she was referring to where they put that concrete in—does the conservancy district have any authority on that ditch? Or just the city?*

Gensler: That's our ditch but I think that was a negotiated agreement with the Village of Corrales. They wanted a right-of-way up there for the road extension—

*Well I have a suggestion. If you'd tell the truth to the public about why you're doing it, then maybe there'd be enough pressure to do the right thing. I don't think anyone was aware that the purpose was to expand the roadway—that it was for expansion of the roadway.*

Gensler: Well from the conservancy's point of view, we're getting lots of pressure from all sorts—to conserve water and we had the Village of Corrales come up and say we'd like to build this road project and as part of the deal, we're going to line this ditch and make it a very narrow and efficient ditch for you and it looked like a good deal from our point of view.

*Tom Turney started this discussion for us this morning talking about the experience on the Pecos and what happened there. A lot of us feel like that's the case study that really needs to be focused on here in regards to what could happen in the Middle Rio Grande. Have you all thought about*

*this? It affected everybody on the Pecos, it affected agricultural users, municipalities, domestic well users—everybody was impacted by what happened out there. Have you thought about what the lesson is for the Middle Rio Grande with regard to that?*

Gensler: Well I missed Tom's presentation so it's a little tough for me to answer. Anybody else want to take a crack at that?

*Albuquerque and other municipalities have junior rights. What's the lesson from the Pecos for our region?*

Frank Titus: I'll give you the lesson. The State of New Mexico, in the person of Steve Reynolds, made some expedient decisions that were predictably, at the time the decisions were made, going to run us short on the Compact. He knew it because I, among other people, talked to him about it. If we know the same things are going to happen here—it has cost—it will end up costing the state of New Mexico a hundred million dollars or more to resolve the issue on the Pecos, and we have even bigger problems coming on the Rio Grande, our costs on the Rio Grande when we bite the bullet and finally begin to solve these problems the costs are probably going to be an order of magnitude bigger. The issue is whether the State of New Mexico can afford to spend a hundred million dollars on the Pecos, and a billion dollars or more on the Rio Grande in exchange for waiting to reach the tough decisions that we know as hydrologists and water lawyers and managers we're going to have to make. The issue is whether we as a state can afford to spend a billion dollars pulling ourselves out of a hole. This morning, I asked Tom Turney for his opinion on what the justification is or what the argument is in favor of the State of New Mexico retaining control of its own water, as opposed to turning it over to a river master appointed by the U.S. Supreme Court. And that is where we're going on the Rio Grande—that's where we are on the Pecos, and it's where we're going on the Rio Grande if we don't accept the fact that we're going to have to change some of the ways we manage water. So is it worth a billion? Do we have a billion dollars to spend on that? My answer is 'no,' but along with that, I can tell you there are a bunch of rational, intelligent people who are working in a direction of planning how we can manage our water resources and not trip over our own shoestrings. And we need some politicians who have the guts to accept the fact that we have to make those decisions. They are going to be unpopular decisions, you know? But I tell you on the Pecos, the people who live in the Pecos River Valley, now, having faced the issue and faced the tough decisions are pretty damn proud of themselves. They feel good about having done it. I'd like to suggest we're in a position to feel good about what we're doing to manage the Rio Grande if we make the tough decisions.

*I was wondering if you would care to put in your oar and say, "I'm of the impression that population is the key," but I want to know some other things that might be key in these tough decisions.*

Titus: Sure. I've already put my oar in. Letty Belin and Conci Bokum and I wrote a book called "Taking Charge of Our Water Destiny" two or three years ago. We printed 5600 copies of them to start and we had a reprint of somewhere in the neighborhood of 5000. They're almost gone so there are some 10,000 copies of that out there and we addressed that fact—population control—but you can't tell people in the United States that they can't move to Albuquerque. What you can do is set up paid costs, pay the predictable accounting costs of people moving to Albuquerque. I

have a lot of respect for Tom Turney—he bit the bullet and was really unpopular. I was his science advisor for three years and I only lasted three years because he got tired of me telling him all the things he was going to have to do. It's an immensely complicated job. It is huge. He got his arms around it and he began to do it. What we're doing now is following up on that. Not all our politicians and not all of our water managers have the guts that Tom did when he was in the position—

Bill Turner: The fact of the matter is the only part of the Rio Grande that's over-allocated—the Middle Rio Grande—is from Cochiti to Elephant Butte. By the time the water gets to Elephant Butte there's plenty of water left over and it can be re-used to offset some of these shortages that we see in the Middle Rio Grande. As a member of the Governor's Task Force on water for six or seven years [?] how do you prevent evaporation off Elephant Butte? Studies that have taken place in the State of New Mexico [paid?] for by the Interstate Stream Commission and the State Engineer [?] show reservoirs in New Mexico that store more than 5,000 acre feet—that would include Navajo, Cochiti, Elephant Butte, Conchas, El Vado, Heron, Caballo, [?] Evaporation off those reservoirs amounts to 595,000 acre-feet a year. There is no water shortage in New Mexico: it's the way that it's managed. And the way that it's managed is basically cast in concrete by the Bureau of Reclamation and the states of New Mexico, Texas and Colorado beginning in about 1906. The 1916 construction of Elephant Butte as well as Rio Grande Compact [...?] That water is egregiously wasted to the people in New Mexico. That water can be salvaged, it can be re-used, and so there is no water shortage. The issue is institutions—legal institutions and institutions of government—that are cast in concrete and are unable to adapt to the exigencies of the times.

*I wanted to talk about growth because I live on the west side and we have a lot of issues on the west side. Since the road bonds have been passed, it's going to open up that whole mesa top to development and we now have a moratorium that Councilor Heinrich sponsored to stop building permits on top of the mesa until there's a—well right now Volcano Heights development is going to be happening on top of the mesa. But there are a few exemptions. Some subdivisions were exempted from that Volcano heights study. That study is looking at 12,000 units on top of the mesa with 20,000 jobs. The concepts are good as far as creating jobs and housing together, but the problem is—there's still the traffic issue, and the water issue, and overcrowded schools, and monument protection, and wildlife issues that still need to be looked at. On top of that, we have Quail Ranch with a proposed population of—Quail Ranch used to be Black Ranch and they were going to be part of the city [of Albuquerque] but now they've moved over to Rio Rancho, so Rio Rancho has annexed them and that's going to be a population of 75,000. And they are going to be looking at pumping water from the river, pumping water from the ground, but the quality of water from the ground isn't that good out there so they have a limited amount of groundwater and they're going to have to pump water from the river and also do the re-injection system—have water in the ground and reuse it. So between this Volcano Heights and Quail Ranch, we also have Westland Development Company. We're talking about a LOT of growth out there, and on top of that, those projects that were exempted from the moratorium, they should be following the EC 35 agreement which is—they were allowed to put a pump station up there for one subdivision and the conditions were they were supposed to do cluster housing and give up 30% for common open space and do xeriscape planning, but they're not even following that agreement anymore. The Water Board has passed it. The Water Authority board should know*

*about that agreement, and yet they allowed that to go through. If you go to the Development Review Board, they only have to approve subdivision ordinance. They don't look at the big picture items. This planning process just looks at everything piece by piece by piece. We do need a master plan and regional plans between us and Rio Rancho and that's just not happening. Our process is just not working.*

O'Malley: I couldn't agree with you more. This is a problem that's been going on for a number of years. We haven't actually done any real planning in the city. We've dropped the ball on that and it's basically killed. I think you've got some folks that have a grievance with the Water Authority—I don't want to put Mark Sanchez on the spot [?]. I think that was a good thing that came out of that, that agreement, and I'm assuming it's being adhered to—I could be wrong. But just talking about the challenges that we have—I hate to use that word over and over again but what is difficult is we don't have integrated planning or integrated systems that connect everything to everything else. And everything is connected; we just don't get that. We look at little pieces of things. I don't know what to say except that we have a lot of work ahead of us.

*A question for each of you: one of the [regional water] plan's recommendations is to establish a dedicated source of revenue for the rest of the water needs. I'd like to know how each of you sees that opening up in the future, so there are some funds available locally, regionally, and within the state to do the planning that is needed.*

O'Malley: Well I think it's important that we dedicate funds, not only for water, but for a lot of things—that we make sure the resources are there if we want to do something like that. It does make a lot of sense. I don't know if it's ever come up in terms of the [city] council, but it is something I'd like to pursue and look at more closely.

Ulivarri: Our management of our funds is taking place and we always have water and wastewater fees. We have future plans and we have money in place for those. In regards to the county—the county is just getting back on its feet to be honest with you. They were in debt over a half million dollars, almost ready to go bankrupt. So they had to address that issue first. Now they've got a handle on that, they are looking at the roads. There are [funding] sources for them, and I think the back burner is water, which is really sad because it should be forefront. One of the things I think we need is—and this is my personal opinion—every well needs to be metered within the county. That's not going to happen via the county. I think that's going to happen via the state because the amount of money it will take is astronomical. But until you get a grip on how much water you use, you can't plan. That's one of the things that need to be done. The city itself can do that. Los Lunas can do that. Bosque Farms can do that. But the people that live within the county proper, they don't know what's going on and how it's affecting everybody else along the river.

Gensler: The district probably this year I suspect will spend between ten and fifteen percent of our operating budget on infrastructure improvements. That's actually a very small amount of the total we'll spend because state and federal agencies have literally come out of the woodwork the last several years to provide funding for the district for projects. They're exactly the kind of projects that I was first asked about—it's people providing funding to the district to do anything we possibly can to free up any additional drop of water. There's a lot of money coming from

federal sources and quite a bit from state sources right now. It may not be enough, but what kind of struck me from those first few questions is I'm hearing from the sixty or seventy people in this audience here that they don't want us to be doing these things. They don't like these things that we're doing to free up additional water for other uses throughout the valley.

*The worse thing you can do is look at one part of the problem and fix it at the detriment of three or four other problems. The big one right now in the Rio Grande reach, to Isleta Pueblo, is that we aren't looking at recharge, we aren't looking at how the water is used. We're going to pave over all the farms and close all the acequias and then Albuquerque and Bernalillo's going to be totally out of water. You've got to look at the big picture.*

Janet Jarratt: One of the things that happens at the district, I can tell you, is that money that comes to them for specific project for them to do, where they're not going out to ask what people want or do any kind of review. They'll have money for a specific project or for a specific type of project. They don't have a lot of control over how some of that money is spent. So there's kind of a balancing act with what the mandate is, including the federal government to do things that are being called efficiency without looking at the overall cost. It's not necessarily the district's issue of how that money is spent.

*One quick comment: Sandoval County had a windfall from Intel about six months or a year ago, and in their rush to spend that windfall, they did choose to take ten million dollars and put it in a permanent fund whose interest will be dedicated only to water budgets. And that's the kind of thing that some other jurisdictions might think about when they have some spare money.*