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Group Releases Candidate Survey on Water Issues

The Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly, a volunteer regional water planning group, today released the results of a survey of state legislative candidates. Entitled “What Do They Know (and believe) About Water Policy,” the report includes the survey questionnaire, tabulated and individual responses and candidate comments (see attachment).

The survey shows significant support for requiring water rights for new domestic wells, for prohibiting or restricting the condemnation of water rights through eminent domain and for prohibiting or restricting long-distance water transfers. The survey also shows unanimous support for the prompt adjudication of Middle Rio Grande water rights. Adjudication would determine who holds senior and junior water rights and whether the region's water is over-appropriated.

Candidates, however, were divided in their responses to such questions as whether the Legislature should be given authority to establish water use priorities and whether “in-stream flow,” i.e., keeping water in the river, should be recognized under state law as a “beneficial use.” And while 10 respondents agreed that county governments should be prohibited from approving new subdivisions without an affirmative finding of water availability from the State Engineer, 7 were opposed or neutral on the issue.

Nineteen of seventy New Mexico House and Senate candidates in Valencia, Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties responded to the thirteen question survey. Incumbents who completed the survey were Miguel P. Garcia, Mimi Stewart, Larry Larranaga, Jimmie C. Hall, Jane F. Powdrell-Culbert, Gerald Ortiz y Pino, Diane Snyder, Cisco McSorley and Sue Wilson-Beffort. Challengers who completed the survey were Bill B. O'Neill, Janice Saxton, Benjamin Rodefer, Paula Papponi, John Sapien, Victor Paul Raigoza, Eric Griego, Tim Eichenberg, Sander Rue and Spiro Gregory Vassilopoulos.

The Water Assembly supports the adoption of sustainable water management policies to achieve the Regional Water Plan's goal of “Balancing Water Use With Renewable Supply.” For more information, see our web site at www.WaterAssembly.org.