

**SANTA FE COUNTY**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**SANTA FE COUNTY WATER: TODAY and TOMORROW**

**November 17, 2025**

**(Continuation of October 27, 2025 Meeting)**

Camilla Bustamante, Chair - District 3

Lisa Cacari Stone, Vice Chair - District 2

Justin Greene - District 1

Hank Hughes - District 5

Adam Johnson - District 4

**November 17, 2025**

**Continued Special BCC Meeting**

**Santa Fe County Water: Today and Tomorrow**

**1. A. Call to Order**

This continuation of the October 27, 2025 special meeting of the Santa Fe Board of County Commissioners Board was called to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. by Chair Camilla Bustamante in the County Commission Chambers, 102 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**B. Roll Call**

Roll call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

**Members Present:**

Commissioner Camilla Bustamante, Chair  
Commissioner Lisa Cacari Stone, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Justin Greene  
Commissioner Hank Hughes  
Commissioner Adam Johnson [10:05 arrival]

**Members Excused:**

None

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Some of you might be wondering why the Commissioners aren't sitting at the dais and why we're in this strange format and as strange as it may be, the interest is putting more of the perspective on our constituents. The questions come from our constituents, taking the focus off of the Commission. This presentation, this was all organized in the interest of informing and including the community. And we had approximately 36 people paying attention online. I've since informed people that this is going to be posted and there will be people who have access to this information now for the coming year.

So I understand there have been no changes to the agenda. Is there anyone who'd like to clarify whether there have been changes or any changes? Manager Shaffer? We don't need to move to approve the agenda. Okay.

**5. Land Use Entitlement Process for Development**

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: We are starting from land use entitlement process for development growth management. So what is what are the steps that Growth Management takes when we when we have something come before us to ensure that there is water? And our first speaker will be Alexander Ladd from Growth Management.

#### A. How Much is Santa Fe County Growing – Really?

ALEXANDRA LADD (Growth Management Department Director):

Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning to everyone. I appreciate the chance to be here to talk to you about all of this and happy that we reconvened, although I was ready to go last time, too. Okay, so today with me is Herbert Foster, one of our Planning Team leads, and he's going to do part of the presentation. Dominic Sisneros, I'm going to play the part of Dominic Sisneros because he had a long planned holiday to take his son to the 49ers game in Phoenix. So, he is not here, but I will play his part instead.

I think a big question comes up a lot. How much is Santa Fe County growing really? And it appears because we've had a flurry of development activity that boy, we're just gang busters growing. But when you look at historic records, we are not growing the way we historically have grown. Now, this is percentage of growth. So obviously, if you have a very small population, you don't have to add a lot of people to have a very high growth rate. And our population is much bigger to begin with, but you can kind of see I think there's a little blip at 2020 that could be a COVID zoom-boom effect right there. But in the last year, our growth rate was 0.12 percent. We've grown 8.18 percent since 2010. A third of our population, our adult population are seniors. And I threw this stat in there just because I thought it was kind of interesting. We have 82 residents per square mile. So even though it feels like we're just so much development and growth going on, the majority of our county does not have any humans, there are probably more cows than humans. So we do have we're not a dense county overall.

And to put that into context, I don't know why these arrows are not working. I'm so sorry. I feel like my kids would be cringing if they saw me. So, should I just be hitting that? Okay. so the UNM's business, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, provides the role of state demographer for the state of New Mexico. So, I looked at some of their growth projections for Santa Fe County and in fact we will continue to grow and then we'll level off and then we will not grow. And there are a few factors that affect these projections. And of course, a projection is a well-educated guess. It's not a forecast. But the three factors that affect growth rate fertility. So, who's having babies? Are there enough people to have babies? And when we look at the number of people in the different generations, there was a graphic I saw that I wish I'd put in here because it was the baby boom generation's gigantic. And then Gen X and then it just keeps getting smaller and smaller. So even if everyone's having babies, you're still going to have fewer babies because we just don't have as many people who are childbearing age. Mortality. so people are living longer. But back to the statistic of a high percentage of senior population, you know, at some point birth versus death, you're going to have more deaths than birth and then in-out migration. This is the big unknown because we don't know what factors may change or may play into why people move here or why people move away from here.

So, with that in mind, I wanted to just provide a little snapshot of the building permits that we've had in Santa Fe County since 2015, which was shortly before we adopted the Sustainable Land Development Code and the Sustainable Growth

Management Plan. And you can see the bright red are single family residences, the bluish color/the turquoise color are accessory dwellings and the mustardy color are mobile home and placements for mobile homes. We kind of went down over the last year and so we think there are probably a few factors. We think that all a little residual effect of the high interest rates and because between the time you get your financing and you actually stick a shovel in the ground can be a couple years and so the current high-interest rates have caught up. So fewer projects are getting initiated and to the stage of being built. And I won't even say it but there have been some question marks about what do tariffs mean for the construction industry? And I think there are a lot of folks who are pretty reluctant to leverage their selves with a lot of uncertainty.

And then what's in the pipeline? So, what do we know is coming online in the next year or two? Herbert's going to go into the sustainable development area, but that's what SDA means, sustainable development area. We have three of them in Santa Fe County. We're only looking at two of them because those are the ones that – SDA1 is our largest growth area. SDA 2 is the next area of growth. So it's a little bit further down the line, but Herbert will cover that in his presentation. And then there's a column for the City. All of the units in the column for the City are the County's project on County-owned land that's within the city limits. So it will be served by City water. You can see this number is almost 3,000 and of that number a thousand of them will be price restricted and set aside for income-qualified folks. So that's a great percentage. This pie chart shows the percentage in the sustainable development area one which is almost 90 percent.

And then the next question, how do we know we need all this housing? The County's Affordable Housing Plan, this is a plan that's required by the state of New Mexico in order to qualify the exemption to the Anti-Donation Clause for affordable housing. It looks at a variety of factors. Basically looks at how many people live here, income ranges, and how many homes and what the price ranges of those homes are and then determines what the gap is. And according to this plan, 17,000 additional housing units are needed between 2022 and 2025 to accommodate the existing employees and residents of Santa Fe County. Now, this doesn't mean that people aren't housed. It means they're inadequately housed, they're doubled up with other families, or they're extremely cost burdened. And that the cost burden factor for sure as well as being inadequately housed that's going to drive out migration, right? So that's going to cause people to want to leave because they need to have more affordable home costs and that has all sorts of economic implications in terms of our job market and who can who can afford to live here and work here. So the 17,000 number, if we remember what the prior slide said, that's a big chunk. This is pretty amazing that we've had this much progress in terms of production over these couple of years. But we have a long ways to go and this isn't even thinking about that future growth.

So I think my point here when it comes to water isn't – the question to ask isn't do we have enough water? The question is, how do we ensure that we manage our water so that everyone who wants to live here can live here? And Jacqueline is going to talk a lot more about lots of great ideas for how we can do that, how we can incentivize conservation, but also water reuse and all the other ways that technologies coming on

board to make it easier, as well. And I think we already have a great culture here in this community of being water conscious and saving water, but it's, you know, we do have a ways to go and so we'll talk more about policy versus regulation versus kind of community culture about water.

Now I'm going to turn it over to Herbert and he's going to talk a little bit about how do we even get to this concept of a sustainable development area.

**B. How Do the Sustainable Growth Management Plan & Sustainable Land Development Code Support Each Other When it Comes to Water?**

HERBERT FOSTER (Planning Team Leader): Good morning everyone. Thanks for having me. I'm Herbert Foster a Planning Team Leader in the Planning Division. One of the teams I'm leading is our efforts to revise the Sustainable Growth Management Plan. So I'm here to talk a little bit about what the Sustainable Growth Management Plan is and how it addresses water resources at a fairly high level. The SGMP is a very high level document itself. I just want to share a couple of ideas on kind of where we think we might be headed in terms of where we're going in terms of revising the document itself. So what is the SGMP? In the eyes of the State, it is the County's comprehensive plan or the general plan. State law says that development regulations must be consistent with the general plan. So what we're after in our current plan in revising it is to unify the development policies and the aspirations of the community with the kind of development that is being regulated. We want to unify the plans and the policies and the regulations. It's also a comprehensive land use plan. It is a long-term comprehensive plan. They typically have or this has a 20-year time horizon with occasional updates. The last time it was revised was in 2010 with some lighter revisions in 2015. I say comprehensive because the idea is to cover all the land within the County's jurisdiction and lead towards a preferred land use plan. But it doesn't mean that we don't partner with other land management agencies, pueblos and other state agencies and entities that own and manage land in a regional partnership because we all share similar resources and a similar future. It's comprehensive and that we try to address all the issues in the county that affect land use and growth and development. They're often called elements like housing, water, sewer, open space, transportation, and so on. We call it comprehensive because we wanted to try and address or include all the voices within the community, all the diverse communities and interests that we have to try and identify kind of the broadest policies and principles that help us grow and decide on development projects.

Another thing that it does do, as Alex mentioned, is it identifies three different sustainable growth development areas. So, SDA, as she said, there's three of them in the County. There is SDA1, which is basically a policy of grow now. SDA2, which is basically grow later. SDA3 is grow much later. And I argue that this is an inherently not sustainable model. It's a model based on infinite growth. So as soon as we fill up number one, well, we just go into number two and soon as two was done, we go into number three. Now, this could be many, many decades or generations until we

actually do that. But nonetheless, I argue that it's not sustainable and we need to take a closer look at the quality and character and the type of growth that is happening within these lines because otherwise we'll continue the trend of what we call sprawl dispersed development that can often be more expensive and have often consequential impacts to the environment and communities.

The SGMP itself and how does the current document address water policy and support sustainability: I mentioned earlier that there's a number of elements in the plan. It addresses water, wastewater, stormwater management in this element. Describes existing conditions of water infrastructure, water policy, water law to give a broader context of what's happening in the water sector in relation to growth and development. It also includes exist official maps which determine where and when and under what conditions the County will participate in infrastructure investments for water and sewer and other infrastructure. There's a number of goals and policies and actions related to water, sewer and stormwater that are intended to kind of give specific direction and guidance for the County and partners to take action for preserving protecting and providing a sustainable water supply.

One use that we typically use for the SGMP is in development review. If there is what we call a discretionary permit, in other words, if there's a development application that comes to the department and it requires a public hearing, requires greater scrutiny from the eyes of the public and the Commission, typically a greater number of studies, our role in long-range planning in the Planning Division is to take a look at the development application and compare it to the goals and policies and objectives of the SGMP to see if it's consistent or not. So that's one important role I mentioned the discretionary permits and that is one of the criteria in the code that a discretionary permit needs to be consistent with the long-range plan because otherwise if our short-term plans are not addressing our long-term needs then why are we why are we approving these developments in the first place?

And finally, a few things that we're looking forward to in revising the SGMP over the next couple of years is public participation. We are under contract now and just beginning what I call a light kickoff in starting our public participation plan and we hope to bring that to the community and the Commission over the next five or six months and have that adopted and then a formal kickoff of the SGMP revisions. The public participation plan will basically outline the different communities and audiences and voices that we need to reach out to, how we're going to communicate with them. And how we're going to collect and analyze the information that we get from them. You know, all those little post-it notes that we get all the meetings. Well, we want to make sure that we're paying attention to all those post-it notes and how it can inform policy and give some guidance to development decisions moving forward. The SGMP revision will include a preferred land use plan to give, I guess as I was saying, hopefully further clarity and guidance as to where and how we are going to grow and that will help also relate to infrastructure improvements and be as efficient as we can with water and sewer and stormwater investments that we're making. There'll be updated goals, actions and policies that we get from informing the public from reaching out to expert folks and who are working in water daily. We want to make this plan as actionable and as informed and

updated as possible.

And then finally one of the outcomes of the SGMP revision will be recommendations on how to update the code so that we can have a greater certainty that the kind of development that we say that we want in the plan is the kind of development that we get through the regulations of our code. So again the crown jewel of this effort is to really unify the regulations and the policies. So again what we're what we're getting is what we want. Happy to – is now for questions or later?

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Let's do whatever you need to do. We are doing this a little differently this time. I think we're getting some good feedback on having the presentation facing the people in the chambers. I will we'll open it up to questions and Daniel will run around with microphones so that we can take the questions when you're ready, Alexandra. And we have about 30 some people online on the Teams and 10 in YouTube. So we do have some viewership. Okay. So go ahead.

MS. LADD: Thank you. we're almost done. So now I'm going to put my Dominic Sisneros hat on. And now I'm Dominic. I just wanted to touch on briefly in the actual process of when a development comes in front of the Growth Management Department. How do we look at water supply? Herbert touched on sort of the bigger policy. Are we are we meeting our community's vision through the development review process? But we actually look at does this project have a committed source of water supply? And I think one issue that's important to note is that when it's possible to connect to a public water supply, a developer does not have the option. They are required to do so. There's a much more sustainable way to manage water supply and to have the data we need to know what else we need to do to ensure sustainability. And then if a water system is not available, the applicant has to demonstrate that they have a self-supplied water source. So, they have to show us their well permit from the State Engineer Office. Or if they are connecting to a mutual domestic system, they have to provide us with a ready, willing, and able letter from that entity. It's not always perfect. We're still working on our workflow a little bit to make sure that we have that information is flowing between agencies.

We are in a situation where we're balancing a lot of different rules from a lot of different entities. So it's not just the County's rules we have to look at. We have to look at the State Engineer. We have to look at the New Mexico Environment Department, the State DOT and then on top of any community organization. So there's a lot of juggling around and makes it interesting.

And then I think Travis talked about this. I I'm going to go kind of fast through here because I think between Travis and Michael Carr, you all heard a lot about the actual technical process for the ready, willing, and able letter and how domestic wells are considered within the County's – in relation to the County system. But the ready, willing and able letter that comes from the County's Utility is documenting that the County says yes we have this water we're willing to extend it to this project. And then also and this is even a very important thing that I think we tend to overlook a little bit that the infrastructure exists to get the water to the project because you know we tend to think of infrastructure is like, oh that boring thing you don't pay attention to but it's really – it has to be an upfront commitment and it has to be built first otherwise the rest of the project

isn't going to happen. So we have to look at what infrastructure is available. And if there's a project that comes in front of the Growth Management staff without a ready, willing and able letter it's not moved forward. Their application is not complete.

And then another big question how do we enforce these County codes? We have a great Code Enforcement Division and they will conduct and we've really improved I think our practices and increased our capacity to conduct periodic inspections to make sure that what an applicant proposed for their project is actually what is getting built. We do again have this sort of weird little handoff with the State's Construction Industries Division where they're inspecting the actual structures that are being built. So sometimes they're not looking for some of the requirements that we have in our Sustainable Land Development Code because that's not part of the Building Code. They're just looking at the structures or the supporting elements of the project. So sometimes, you know, we then we go back and we say, Oh, wait, you didn't follow the setback. And so sometimes things can get a little confusing. But we are always working we're working closely with the other entities that we need to work with and I feel like we're making improvements every day.

And I think Michael Carr talked a little bit about the requirement to install a well meter and to report water usage. So, we've talked about that that's a difficult element to implement but we do have code enforcement officers who can in fact verify that the well meter was installed. And then the Growth Management Department also requires that that water covenants are recorded with every permit. So that we are indicating through this covenant that there's a limit that there's a quarter-acre foot per year limited limit per residence.

Okay, now we can take questions.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Are there any questions? If you raise your hand, I'll bring a microphone. And we'll also have questions from the Commission as well.

STEVEN SCHMELLING: Yes, I'm Steven Schmelling from the Water Policy Advisory Committee. You talked about water supply. Could you say anything about wastewater management from new developments and how you ensure that that can be adequately handled?

MS. LADD: To be sure that they can be accurately what was the last part of the question?

MR. SCHMELLING: Yes. Could you talk about how you ensure that a development has adequate plans in place to manage its wastewater?

MS. LADD: So that's a great question. For developments that are hooking up to the County system, again, our colleagues in utilities are helping to verify that that's going to work. For self-supplied systems, we do require that there is documentation that that describes how that's going to be handled. But that's a great, that's a big question. A lot of self-supplied single-family builders, of course, are doing septic tanks and so that's all getting permitted through the Environment Department. But the wastewater issue I think is probably one that we are still continuing to work on.

MR. SCHMELLING: Thank you.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Next.

SAGE BIRD: Does the regulation apply to existing businesses and where do indigenous communities in the County play a role in this? And have they been consulted or have you done outreach about this to them?

MS. LADD: So, let me make sure I understand your question. How involved are indigenous communities with the County's management of its water supplies? Did I get that right?

MS. BIRD: In the County and like Tesuque, for instance, and the regulations you tend to intend to put in place, does that apply to existing businesses, existing corporations?

MS. LADD: So, that's a great question. Brian I might kick that one over to you for some more clarity. But I think just to be clear; the County's regulations do not apply to the pueblo communities. They are not they're out of our jurisdiction. Any federal land, any state land, any pueblo land is not covered by our rules. However, because water is a regional issue and maybe Brian can add some detail here, you know, we have to have those conversations regionally and we do have a practice and a history of working with our pueblo partners to make sure that we're managing the water for the interest of everybody, of course. Regulations apply to new development. So we don't tend to retroactively apply new rules unless an existing business or corporation changes what they're doing. So they build a big expansion of their business or they add more units to a facility, then they have to come into compliance with the new rules, if that makes sense. Is that that was part of your question too, right.

MS. BIRD: I'm just wondering how involved indigenous communities within the county have been on this project cuz I'm sure they have a lot to contribute for solutions.

BRIAN SNYDER (Public Works Director) So, as it as it relates to water, we're partnering with indigenous communities in the in the northern part of the county: San Ildefonso, Tesuque, Nambe, Pojoaque as part of the Aamodt Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System. We have regular dialogue with them, technical evaluation committees as well as meeting with the anywhere from support staff all the way up to the governors of each of those entities. As it relates to wastewater, the County is has funding. I think it's an order of magnitude of about \$200,000 that going to be initiating a planning effort to look at what a regional wastewater system in the Tesuque Valley corridor, much in the same corridor as we're working on the water side but on the wastewater side, to evaluate what opportunities exist for existing partnerships and how can we build that out over time and the feasibility of that. So that's I would say, the planning group is charged with that. But I would say over the next couple months we'll be partnering with our partners the Tesuque, Pojoaque, Nambe and San Ildefonso on a similar conversation but on the wastewater side.

MS. BIRD: My understanding is that there are some indigenous communities in the state and maybe in the county that might not have access to running water or is there a planned solution for that or plans to solve that in the future?

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: If I may, first, I don't know that that's the case in Santa Fe County, but they're under a different jurisdiction. The County does not have any authority within the tribal communities, and anything outside of the Santa Fe County

area would be part of the sovereign nations relationships with either our state government or our federal government and ensuring that they would have water. But it's their determination is what's respected in how and what they'd like to do to do that. But it's really out of out of our purview here.

DANIEL FRESQUEZ (Media Coordinator): And can I get your name for the record, please?

MS. BIRD: Sage Bird.

MR. FRESQUEZ: All right. Thank you.

MR. FOSTER: If I could, I wanted to respond to a question in terms of the Sustainable Growth Management Plan. We're at the very, very beginning of this long-range land comprehensive land use plan. I mentioned it addresses the County's jurisdiction in terms of recommended regulations but nonetheless pueblos, federal land management agencies we're approaching them as partners and the first thing we're doing now is a public engagement/public participation plan as soon as the Commission adopts this plan the very next morning my intention is to bring a letter to and hand deliver it to the governor, and we I know we want to reach out to pueblo governments and Native organizations and nonprofits that serve Native Americans on and off the community, right? I know it's also possible that at Taos Pueblo they have agreements with the city for sewer treatment. So those kinds of agreements and investments are possible. Whether or not they're being discussed here now, I don't know.

MS. BIRD: Will your community outreach also be conducted in Spanish for the Spanish speaking populace?

MR. FOSTER: Haven't decided yet, don't know yet. It's a for sure a consideration. I'm seeing a nodding head. Yes.

MS. BIRD: For the state to practice language access, which are -- I think that there are a lot of Spanish speakers in the County who would like to be informed in their preferred language.

MR. FOSTER: I agree. Absolutely. There's websites. There's things we can do to make that the kind of information more accessible to different people in different languages even any number of communication styles. Absolutely.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: So, I've got a couple questions if I may. So, the first one sort of tags on to, this woman's previous questions about regional planning, both with our cities within the County and the pueblos, right? We don't have jurisdiction over the City of Santa Fe. We don't have jurisdiction over the City of Espanola, Edgewood, and so on. But in general, there are great opportunities for collaborative projects. And so sort of to fill in a little bit on what you know what was mentioned here. Herbert, so to your point we do have MOAs I think uh between the four pueblos in the north to start to investigate a regional water system but it's in the very, very early planning stages and so we are collaborating with them and consulting them but it was a zero commitment on anybody's part we just wanted to trade information so that we could know how to work together on that. And so, I would hope that when we do a comprehensive plan that we would look at that, both to their growth plans, our growth plans, and that we can, figure out how to make sure.

Then when you talk about 17,000 units short, I would hope we would also start to

look regionally. If somebody lives just over the border in Rio Arriba County or, you know, even as much as we don't love the idea of people commuting from Rio Rancho but if somebody's family somebody works in Albuquerque and somebody works in Santa Fe, Rio Rancho is a humane place in the middle sort of so there's sort of really investigating this and to say, you know, do we really need that growth? I do think that we need to focus that growth on the workforce as opposed to second homeowners and things like that. So, finding ways that the strategic growth management plan and our SLDC focus on smaller units that are more aimed at our workforce as opposed to second homeowners and finding ways to encourage and incentivize that type of housing. And then one of the slides up there showed that we were short on – or that the affordability gap was on single family homes. And as much as that's an aspirational goal, single family homes are very inefficient. And that may be the typology that we want to go for, but that may not be the typology that we want to go for. And so looking at what the right mix of size and type of home and whether it's clustered development, whether it's town homes, whether it's multifamily, whatever it is, like I didn't see multifamily up there as a statistic. I saw single family homes and casitas/ADUs, but I didn't see multifamily in the in that statistic. So, yep, you've got an answer there.

MS. LADD: So the answer is pretty simple. We haven't had any until the last two years.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Okay. Really? Even in town home maybe they count as single-family homes, but in Rancho Viejo they had some clustered.

MS. LADD: I believe that Rancho Viejo they're all still showing up as single family when it comes to permitting.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Okay. It'd be good to nuance that a little bit because a town home uses a lot less water, right? It'd be interesting to see how many of those homes are hooking up to utilities, right, as a percentage of our growth, so that we start to see, Oh, you know, 80 percent of our homes are in SDA1 and they are hooking up to our water system and or our wastewater system.

MS. LADD: And Commissioner to that point 90 almost 90 percent of those permits are in SDA1 which means that a huge majority of those are hooking up to the County's systems.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: That's good, good to know, thanks. And then one of the questions I know that we've had here on the Commission is, how many commitments have we put out there but have yet to be built? You know, ready, willing, and able letters, we've approved lot development, but maybe they haven't been built. And so we have maybe 10,000. I don't know what the number is. So, I'm just throwing, you know, are there 10,000 homes out there that we've committed to, but have yet to be built that maybe are banking, for lack of a better term, water access when we could be using – and it might be the wrong type of housing for our needs these days.

MS. LADD: Commissioner Greene, I think the numbers I provided were they're pretty comprehensive. Some of those projects are not in active construction, but they are to that commitment stage, but we have expiration. So, these approvals do not last forever.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: And do we then it would be interesting to

know how many sunset and then do expire so we can see sort of where that's going. But, very interesting. Thank you for putting this together.

MR. FRESQUEZ: We have a question back here. If I can get your name for the record before you ask.

MAYA CLIFFORD: Sure. Hi, my name is Maya Clifford. I'm the general manager of the Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District. Good morning. Hi, Commissioners. Hi, County Manager Shaffer. Hi, Brian. Alex, great presentation. To Commissioner Greene's most recent comment, there's a reality here, right, about how long it takes for construction to actually get constructed. I think in Eldorado, I read a statistic at some point from my predecessor that it took 18 years on average for developments to come even partway through to fruition. With the County, I guess, committing to delivering water or building phases of infrastructure to get water delivery to certain parts of the County, my question is would that sunsetting, quote unquote, that's supposed to happen, is there going to be like a retroactive reflection back to look at past commitments that are per se more than 20 years old. And I don't know the SLDC well enough and my general counsel isn't here with me, but I am curious about what part of the statute drives that development commitment and how long that would last before it expires with an with a development or a developer agreement? Like how long is that statutorily/is that obligation live? Thank you.

MS. LADD: Thank you, Maya. I was actually in my brain thinking about that meeting we had the other day and how we're working on improving that communication with the entities that supply water that aren't the county. So, thank you for being here.

I think in a nutshell most entitlements that go to public hearing so the larger projects mostly they expire after two years. There's opportunity to get an extension a one-year extension. I don't know and maybe Brian can answer this, a ready, willing and able letter I imagine it goes away when the entitlement goes away but I haven't been here long enough to see that happen.

MR. SNYDER: I don't think there is a consistent ready, willing, and able letter. It has varied over the years. So some may not have an expiration date but we're also looking at that through a closer lens with upcoming ready, willing and ables.

GREG SHAFFER (County Manager): If I could add to that, Chair Bustamante. So the most recent iteration so ready, willing, and able letter doesn't provide any right to service to anyone. You have to follow that up with a utility line extension and water delivery agreement. And while the form of those have varied over the years I think the most recent iterations over the last period of time that I'm aware of, you know, probably the last decade, those agreements are tied to the underlying entitlements. So if you do not timely get your subdivision approval which is the biggest commitments that we would be talking about the obligation goes away. Even if you receive approval of a preliminary and final plat under state law and the SLDC, those are time limited. Alex can give you those times, but I think you have three years to file the plat. You might be able to extend it for two years, what have you. But those time frames are set forth in state law as I as I recall it and are reflected in our SLDC. So, I hope that addresses your question.

MS. CLIFFORD: Thank you, Commissioners. Thank you, County

Manager Shaffer and thank you, Brian. One follow-up question while noted about the line extension and agreements that are standard practice, I think, in all water districts and county and municipal organizations across the state., you are 100 percent correct. I am curious though, in the past the County has allowed for developments to phase things over time because obviously the price of steel fluctuates and getting things to New Mexico can be, for lack of better terms, challenging, and getting, you know, the right valves, the right pressures, the right, ARVs, all the different components of building out a line take, you know, phasing. And that's very reasonable. But I guess I'm curious about is the County still going to allow line extensions to be phased or is it going to harden its requirements for developers to commit more upfront maybe funds or infrastructure so they're not allowed to phase going forward. So that pushes the timeline forward. I'm really curious about how these timelines are going to move going forward and how developments are going to be or developers in some ways are going to be kind of pushed forward in a more efficient fashion because I know that hasn't happened at least in Eldorado in the past. So, thank you.

MS. LADD: Yeah, I think that's a great question. And our past practices probably have certainly have not been perfect. The Growth Management, we require a letter of credit or a bond for the future phases which is a pretty big incentive to finish building it or to decide not to finish building it and end it there.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yeah, I have a question. Back to affordable housing and Commissioner Greene's comments about town houses. Are you proposing or are we going to see before us changes to the SLDC and that Growth Management Plan that incentivizes more affordable housing and when do you think that'll come?

MS. LADD: So, Commissioner Hughes, I was just looking to see if any of my affordable housing colleagues were online because I don't want to speak for them, but, we have revisions to Chapter 13 of the SLDC, which is the inclusionary zoning requirement, well underway. And I believe that at least making the application of the regulation more efficient and more effective is certainly part of that. But I can't really speak to and it's possible as we start to get really get out into the community to begin the revisions of the Sustainable Growth Management Plan, that's where we would establish that vision for the future and then when we do the subsequent changes to the code, we would want to implement that vision.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Do you have any idea what changes you're proposing or is that the staff on affordable housing staff needs to answer that?

MS. LADD: Well, I would defer most of that question to affordable housing staff. but I think one of the big ones to the point of where is all the non-single family housing. We had language in the code that provided incentives and fee waivers to home ownership housing and just sort of oops, forgot about other kinds of housing. So that kind of thing we – and it's very typical after a code's been in place for almost 10 years where you start to see like, Oh, we really thought that things were going to go that way and they haven't. Circumstances have changed or we just didn't realize how vague and confusing and not specific the language was. So there are lots of – I almost call it more like technical corrections to make it work better as it was originally conceived. And

then once we go through the planning process, you know, that's when we would listen to the community speak and see if we had appetite and vision for more.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: And do you have any timeline for those changes? Like are we going to go to public the public and the Commission all get to see the changes and then vote on them?

MS. LADD: Yeah, and you'll hear a lot more about that later this week in our strategic planning session. But the affordable housing changes are, I would say, 90 percent there to a redline state. And so, we're -- you know, of course, nothing moves forward as quickly as you feel like it should when you're looking at regulatory changes, but we will begin a stakeholder focus group process and the Commission will be looped in at that stage.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: With full recognition that this drives up the housing costs, will we find way I'm just not going to say will we -- how will we be sure to find ways and I don't know that this is an answer that you would give or this would be for a later presentation to assure that water catchment systems maybe reuse of gray water things like that are part of our future developments just integral to how it's done? It has long been a reason to not do it because of the cost that it ensues but this is a water conversation. And how are we going to make sure that that's happening? Is that going to come with Jacqueline or is that going to be part of what will happen with the development code?

MS. LADD: Commissioner Bustamante, that's a great question. I love that question. And Jacqueline is going to dive into some of those specifics. We're and again, like I said, we're still working on refining how do we because we don't control the building permitting. itself in house, so if we require wonderful sustainability features, it's very hard for us to regulate that. We can regulate that they get built because that's easy. You just look and it got built, but we can't really regulate the use over time as well. So, so that's just a challenge and we're working on that. Our new Code Enforcement Supervisor used to work for CID. So that's super helpful cuz he really understands how their process works. And so we're, you know, we're continuing to refine that. So someday, my dream, I'll just say it here, is that we do this building permitting in house at least to the extent that we can look at how some of these sustainability features are built.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Wonderful. Thank you. Commissioner Cacari Stone.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, Alex. Thank you, Herbert for your presentation. And I wanted to pick up on what you said Alex. I think it was a really good question. How do we ensure we manage our water to make sure all that live here have it, right? So my questions are around as we're thinking about our strategic planning two days later this week and Ms. Bird asked some good questions as well and the first four presentations we had earlier in the month really talked and spoke to our current paradigm and approach to water as supply demand a commodity, buy, sell; how can we and I want to you and/or your team, how can we integrate a more indigenous holistic approach around equity and water as we think about managing it? And what would that look like in our strategic planning retreat this week to insert larger vision

framework for addressing that with some clear metrics and objectives?

MS. LADD: Commissioner, that's a great question. I don't know that I have technical expertise on the water management side to answer to give you like a great idea about that. But I will say that I think traditionally indigenous communities have been very, very, very good at managing water resources and reusing water and working within those rhythms of mother nature and what's going on in the climate. And so I think and Jacqueline is going to probably talk about this a little bit more. We've created or she and I don't want to talk too much about it, but we're trying to provide some materials for people just regular homeowners to improve their water management practices on their own personal site. So, how do you build a rain garden at your house? How do you capture water coming off your roof? How do you maybe reuse your gray water? And really bringing it down to the level of the individual homeowner. So, I do think that and you know, I don't want to speak for indigenous values because I'm not indigenous, but I do feel like the whole idea of sustainability is tied up with well, how does the average person get there?

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you. And you know I think there is a role for the regional issue for joint resilience from an interjurisdictional coordination and I'm trying to look at what we can explicitly name and integrate into our strategic planning. Do we have anything – what would be your recommendations to strengthen our interjurisdictional collaboration? I know we've mentioned MOUs, but what would you recommend from your vantage points both of you?

MR. FOSTER: Thank you. The SGMP, the Sustainable Growth Management Plan, will undoubtedly address water. A number of documents like this can take maybe describe principles or axioms. Water is life, a principle for example an axiom of living. And that kind of information of course is very high level visionary but it really lays the foundation of our values and how we treat water and how we treat land. One thing specific that we're considering and is in the SGMP, I mentioned a preferred land use plan. Where do we put all these people basically is the question without sacrificing environment, water, resources, culture, community the need the real the needs access to resources so a lot of community design is involved in that. But one approach I would like to take in the preferred land use plan is by watershed. The watershed is the unit of analysis, it's the unit of planning, it is the unit for understanding the community. Watershed that I think is very inherently understood around here and it's a platform for a conversation and then when we look at the land from the watershed and we remove all those borders I think it opens up a conversation about how we treat the land and its relationship to water which is that an indigenous point of view? I don't know. That's Herbert's approach to how do we can achieve this project and address how we can address water, water resources, infrastructure and these relationships as terms of watershed.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you. And you know I've definitely I've been looking at consultants with the Dine communities, Navajo Nation doing? What are some of the pueblos – I think there's resilience indigenous planners around water and we haven't heard those kind, at least since I've been here in January. I think I don't know if there's room for consultative services from these folks as we look at

our strategic planning as you're looking at updating our sustainable development codes. But I wanted to know what are the incentives around incentives conservation and reuse? Do we have anything written that we can update or focus on in strategic planning this week?

MS. LADD: Commissioner Cacari Stone, I think, Jacqueline is going to touch on some of that.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Okay, that's great. I appreciate that. And then, just one other question and I appreciate it: do we have a dashboard that actually tracks water usage in the County? Is it something that we can consider as we look at transparency? I had brought up the idea of also putting online who we buy from, who we sell to as a transparency system for accountable government.

MS. LADD: Commissioner Cacari Stone, that's a little out of my wheelhouse, but I know Brian's team tracks all of that data very thoroughly. So I'm not – I won't speak to how available it is to the public.

MR. SNYDER: Commissioner, we do track the data through our water customers, but we do not have a dashboard that's outward facing. And I think we heard that, during Travis's and Michael's conversation earlier, well, earlier this month or end of last month to start looking at that and how we share that information. But we do not have that currently.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Well, thank you. It sounds as though we have the capacity and as we look at more collaborations with the City that might be a neat opportunity with the new administration and some new councilors and mayor to think about how we can do a joint tracking. I would love us moving forward.

And then finally as you think about partnerships please count me in for, that we have the Agua Fria Water Association, a very, very strong network. We're looking at water rights across many generations. They're very active and the Spanish-speaking community on the south side. I've been working with the councilors that overlay in that district that I'm in. Definitely a need and I want to re-echo Ms. Bird's suggestion and I really support that. Thanks.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you, Commissioner. A follow-up comment, Commissioner Greene.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: I think, yes. So one of the things that I hope we can start to look at is, is when we look at like an ADU that counts as a unit, right? But ADUs are sometimes a quarter the size of another unit. And so to start to give some qualitative and quantitative benefit to smaller units. So a unit isn't a unit isn't a unit. A McMansion that's 6,000 square feet and eight bathrooms and so on is not the same as an ADU that your parents or your grandchildren can live in on your same property and has less impact on our water systems. And so that we start to give more granular detail to that and incentivize smaller units maybe the form based code and different more innovative ways in whatever our next generation plan comes in to be. Thank you.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. If there are no other questions from the chamber, I'd like to see if we have any questions online. [There were none.] For those of you who are recording Sage Bird, it's going to be recorded. This is actually being

recorded right now. So, I understand you want to use your phone and that's okay, but you don't have to if you don't want to.

MS. BIRD: Yes. I understand there's a housing crisis in Santa Fe County with the crisis. Is there any future plan to solve this without looking to monetize it or you know because or capitalize on solving the housing crisis like partnering with developers who might maybe take tax credits. So it's instead of big payments so it's better for the people who are looking to become homeowners.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: If I may direct that to the project that we just we have two really amazing projects that are being supported. And I don't want to miss speak on the name of those two projects. If you want to let them know. The two that absolutely.

MS. LADD: Thank you, Commissioner. There are three tax credit projects that are coming online that the County has supported both with direct financial assistance as well as other incentives. So that's, you know, my past work was with the City of Santa Fe as the Affordable Housing Director and that was the approach. We would leverage the investment from the private sector by providing incentives and making it easier for developers to build housing with a variety of price points.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you very much. Herbert.

MR. FOSTER: Thank you. One recommendation that I know is going to end up at least in the Sustainable Growth Management Plan, we might call incremental development. It's amending our development regulations for parking lot coverage, some of those kinds of things. But also a program of education and technical assistance for what we call cash rich, I'm sorry, land rich/cash poor families and communities who may want and need a rental house in the back or something for grandma or cousin. So, this program and the code amendments would come and allow local land owners to build their own rental house in their backyard or sideway or wherever. So it's really empowering local people to meet their own needs, one bedroom at a time, one building at a time, so we don't wait for the 244-unit from the big developer to hopefully they give us more affordable than they're committed to. It's a different approach that I believe will empower local folks and there's a lot of tools out there that will enable this. I have every reason to believe that it will be not in place now but will be a recommendation from this process.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you very much. All right.

MS. LADD: And just to clarify, those projects are 100 percent affordable.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Very good. All right. Thank you very much.

## **6. Water Resilience and Sustainability**

### **A. How Does the County Support Homeowners, Small Community Water Systems & Traditional Communities?**

JACQUELINE BEAM (Sustainability Manager): Good morning everyone. Jacqueline Beam, Sustainability Manager with the Community Development Department. And I guess I am sweeping up the rear here to talk about more about the behaviors as we work with water and manage our water that's available to us.

I briefly just want to talk about the Climate Action Plan and these are all of the areas that the Sustainability Division is actively working with conservation as well as keeping in mind the nexus between energy and water usage. We have a number of programs online that we keep up and available and updated as much as possible so that constituents can find resources and tools to help manage their own water and their own water footprint. We also have a green stormwater infrastructure that I will be talking about and Alex referred to that briefly in our guide that is coming out. And then we have a Water Policy Advisory Committee that we also are liaison for. And exciting news for our Next Generation Water Summit coming up in '26. We will be focusing our portion of that summit which is nationwide, it's recognized nationwide, our portion of that summit for the County will be on rural and traditional usage of water and gray water usage.

So with that, how do we support small community water systems? The Climate Action Plan focuses mainly on the energy side of things admittedly, but we also have a chance with our nature-based climate solutions to decrease carbon by 25 percent. And a lot of that has to do with just how we manage the soil in our communities. We look mainly at soil health and vegetation and coverage. And so we're looking at agriculture and Laird Graeser will be talking a little bit more after myself on data regarding that. But our agriculture uses up to 60 percent of our water statewide. And so those are areas that are low-hanging fruit that we can really focus on. All of the ecosystem services that we have in our climate action plan were evaluated for risks and the risks assessments through the USGS and First Street Foundation told us that – they reported that, of course, wildfire is the highest, but what happens to the soil as a result of wildfire is really the main problem because that bakes your top layer and you can't get penetration or infiltration from the water. So then that leads to flooding and there's all kinds of low-hanging fruit things that we can do on the individual level, residential level, developer level to increase infiltration through just low tech means.

On the energy and water conservation nexus, of course, the further you have to pump water, the more you use in energy, the more water you're going to use. So, if we're always thinking about those things, that will help in our SLDC upgrades and updates as well. And then the upgrades to the SLDC is something that we're working actively with Growth Management on. And we provided to Growth Management and hopefully a lot of those things will be coming forth in more concrete form. But we provided to Growth Management recommendations for the GSI which is green stormwater infrastructure, not only as it relates to the residential level, but roads, medians, all of those areas are ways, those are opportunities for us to harvest water and infiltrate.

And on our website: these are active tools that anyone can get on to sustainability under the department section under Community Development Department and you can look at a water calculator and see how much water you're using as it relates to the average. And the nationwide average is 82 gallons per day. Just think in general terms, every minute you spend in a shower is about a gallon. And so any of those fixtures that you have and appliances that you can use water sense products to replace will significantly reduce your water usage. I highly recommend the water footprint as opposed to the water calculator. Just a personal note.

And then also I want to talk about native plants. My goal in focusing on these low

tech solutions is that we all start to feel a little bit more empowered to do what we can in our own yards, in our own, whether it's volunteering if you don't have a yard. There are so many things that we can do and native plants are drought tolerant naturally. We need to move away from the idea of xeriscaping which is lots of rock and gravel that increases the temperature of the soil significantly. And all it does is bake the soil and it creates a more difficult transaction between the water and filtrating and you lose your nutrients. It it's not good. So, I hear that often and I know even in Albuquerque they're looking at xeriscaping quite a bit, but it really is a – it's a great way to increase your heat island effect basically and decrease the soil health. So, xeriscaping and permaculture tips are also on our website. And we as a County are mainly looking at domestic well users and mutual domestics. We only have 4,000 folks that are on our utility right now. And so when we approach this challenge, we're looking at those behaviors and how can we influence folks in a way that will help them to think of the natural resources that they have available and we do have enough. I we are looking at for instance green stormwater infrastructure, we have 12 to 14 inches of precipitation. And one easy way to calculate for harvesting your rainwater is to keep, as Alex mentioned, keep all of the water on site. And you can look at that 12 to 14 inches can lead depending upon the size of your rooftop – I'm trying to find the calculation here, I should know it off the top of my head, but I don't – you can irrigate for at least a season from our monsoons that we're receiving now. And the time of the huge retention pond is gone and it's gone. So, let's look at much smaller rain gardens throughout the properties and ways to incentivize through the SLDC for developers to create infiltration in smaller areas which increases canopy, increases native planting and also lowers the temperature of the soil and increases the health of the soil.

One way that we offer that through our compost program, and that's an easy, easy way to increase organic matter and make your soil a lot more spongy is by composting. And it's something that we offer to at least 50 folks every year. And we're seeking to increase that this year if it's possible. And there are many ways that everyone can compost. It's a very low, inexpensive, low tech way to increase your soil. I bring up my fixer upper many, many times. but I will bring it up again. I started out with a backyard that was nothing but sand. And over the last six years, I've just been composting and increasing my soil health, reshaping so that I'm catching water. And it is becoming the most luxurious native pollinator oasis in comparison to what it was just by a little work every year. And so that's something that we are trying to focus on in our division.

Also our Earth Day and workshops we provide rain garden workshops. We work with the Santa Fe Watershed Association, River Source. All of those workshops we advertise in our newsletter and again the Next Generation Water Summit which is coming up in June and that will be an opportunity for everyone to come and learn more about for instance the agricultural reuse. I was just in a tour. It was a urban greening tour by Bezos Grant in Albuquerque and they're doing some great things with gray water usage and agriculture and I would love to see us working more with the aggregate program for instance and as Alex has her ideals of where we're headed. I would love to see us incentivize some of these things through the SLDC so that we're not increasing the cost necessarily, but we're focusing on low tech ways. And if we are increasing the costs,

we're offsetting it through incentives.

The green stormwater infrastructure, I do have a list of what we will be focusing on and it will be soil health, financing for water. And I know Andrew is working with mutual domestics on a cohesive way to bring mutual domestics together to help support each other. And so the finance for water will be another avenue that we can reach mutual domestic operators. And I know that the Green Chamber also works with hotels on a program to incentivize water usage or bringing down water usage. And so all of those things are something that we're actively working towards. We do not have like the City rebates currently. We don't have anything other than the incentives that a homeowner or a developer can look at and think about ways to make their project or their location more appealing, healthier and so that's something that through the SLDC that we can all focus on and collaborate together. This is the guide. It's in its baby format, but I'm happy to pass it around if anyone wants to look at it. And it has not been finished, but it should be finished in December. And it's the green stormwater infrastructure guide that Alex was referring to. It addresses both areas that might be a little bit more densely populated as well as more rural areas. And it's a go-to guide. I will say if you're looking at a large rain garden, it can get costly if you do it right. And so there are ways that you can do it in a much smaller scale at your home. And this guide will show you how to do that whether it's incrementally creating divots and soil sponges which are just wood chips in the ground, inoculating with microbials and fungi. All of those things will help to infiltrate water and absorb water and hold it for future use. And with that, I stand for any questions.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. Are there any questions in the for Jacqueline? Do we have questions? Commissioner Greene.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Thank you, Jacqueline. I appreciate looking at traditional communities and these small rural communities. I'm wondering if there's a focus on agricultural land. I see the nexus of, you know, water for agriculture and land preservation and water preservation working with the acequias, working with all of those; is there a specific carve out for that focus?

MS. BEAM: Absolutely, Commissioner. I have to admit that most of our focus in the recent three, four years has been on energy as opposed to water and resilience. And that is something that we're seeing in sustainability best practices is the move towards resiliency because we're already getting the extreme weather events. So we need to start thinking about ways to mitigate some of the flooding and work together more closely in agriculture and as I stated 60 percent I believe it was 60 percent of our state water is used in irrigation so what can we do to investigate gray water usage for those. What about crops? They're looking at saffron in some locations and moving away from alfalfa which is requires a lot of water. So without getting too deep into the weeds in that I think that that's an opportunity absolutely for us to work with Growth Management and the aggregate program and in our WPAC we are already working with the mayordomos and the associations and so a lot of continued work.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Additionally, looking at trying to mitigate heat island effect and having native trees and shady spaces and, you know, we don't necessarily need a lawn on everybody's property, but you probably need a tree, right?

Something to sit under and to reduce that heat island effect. And so, building that into the SLDC, the SM -- strategic plan and trying to find those best practices to make us a more verdant place, but using water judiciously to make sure that we have greener spaces. But it's not lawns. It's not, you know, wasteful use. It's really effective, impactful.

MS. BEAM: Absolutely. The more coverage you have on that soil, the better and native, native, native species as much as possible. Up to 70 percent of your space needs to be native in order for that ecosystem to operate optimally. So, it's always a good rule of thumb as you're planting.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Great. Thank you.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Are there any additional questions? Anyone online? [None were identified] Okay. Commissioner Cacari Stone and then Commissioner Hughes.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you for all your work, Jacqueline, and your team. I'm just curious because when I was looking at some former reports and then reading some historical data, certainly the hotel industry and tourism really does drive the water usage. And what do we do as a County? Do we have any credits or rebates or can we do green hotel certification that's County run? I'd like to know your creative ideas on how to really incentivize conservation and then can we work with New Mexico True to publish hotels and really think creatively working across silos in the county.

MS. BEAM: Sure. I will probably defer to Glenn from the Green Chamber regarding the county program for hotels that has been established and I know most of the hotels are in the city but it is a program that's active. And as far as rebates are concerned we do not have anything right now in line. We have worked periodically in the past with Save Water Santa Fe and they have some great programs that I would love to see us emulate if we can move around the challenge of the Anti-Donation Clause. That's something that has come up in the past for us. And so we just have to show the quantitative benefit to all in order to justify it.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you. And regarding individual users and rain barrels, they're very expensive. I know my mother-in-law couldn't afford maybe just one rain barrel. Can we collaborate with the City to do bulk purchasing and offer greater steeper discounts on rain barrels?

MS. BEAM: That is definitely a potential. I would take it a step further and work with residents on diverting that water because what's happening now is our storms are so large and they're getting dumped on in a way that they're just overflowing and so it's not really helping us long term. So you can't store that water that's just spilling over. And so the green stormwater infrastructure guide will also talk about that ways that folks can divert their water. And then there's also, I would love to see a laundry to landscape program in our SLDC as well. And in this tour that we did with the green basis urban greening grant, there are kits that you can get for \$400/\$500 if you're a do-it-yourselfer and start use reusing your water from your laundry and not from your kitchen sink but from your taps other taps and that's an easy to do thing. I mean, you can take that all the way up to, you know, \$40,000 if you really want to hire someone to come in and completely redo your water system, but there are accessible ways, and I would

love to see that as an incentive that potentially we could look at. Especially folks on domestic wells, that can stretch your domestic well usage for years just by reusing your laundry.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: I appreciate that. I love your creative ideas. I also just want to do a reality check on the incomes of most of our communities. I mean, I live on the southside. Most of the incomes people are living under the poverty level, but we have a large proportionate growth of immigrant communities, those who can't afford this. Is there a way to get grants to be able to offer free of charge or a small fee for rain barrels or this \$500 laundry to landscape system?

MS. BEAM: I will just be honest. We're very understaffed right now and we're trying to wrap up some grants, but it is definitely next on our list to look at grants for more green stormwater infrastructure and assisting in this way. I think the affordable housing folks, those that qualify under the AMI, they would not be, if I'm understanding that correctly, they would not be held to the same rules of the Anti-Donation Clause. So, I think there is a definitely an opportunity there that we should pursue.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: I appreciate that. And I think earlier this year, we did discuss maybe that the County needed, a grant management, at least one FTE across to help go look for grants. And I believe we discussed it with the County Manager and we're looking at – County Manager Shaffer did we fund a full-time position for grants seeker, grants manager?

MANAGER SHAFFER: Chair Bustamante, Commissioner Cacari Stone, yes, that FTE was funded. We have not yet been successful in filling it. In parallel to those efforts, the State has recently stood up within I believe the Department of Finance and Administration a capital grants unit to work specifically with local governments and state agencies to identify opportunities. So in the interim and even after that position is filled we'll also leverage those state provided resources to identify grant opportunities in any area of interest.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, County Manager. A lot of people have lost their jobs at universities and education institutions that work on grants. Maybe we could try to recruit someone who needs a job due to NIH cuts and stuff. Thanks.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner Hughes.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yeah, this is similar to my question about affordable housing, but I wonder if we need changes to the SLDC to implement some of your ideas and are we going to bring those forward in strategic planning or later?

MS. BEAM: I believe strategic planning would be a great place to look at some. For instance, we have a chapter in the SLDC that's just kind of on hold for water issues and so really focusing as a collective on the conservation ideas would be a great brainstorming session. We just recently started up again with the sustainability and livability working group with Growth Management and we'll be meeting regularly to discuss those recommendations that were made by the contractor in the GSI process. But every opportunity we have I believe we should tackle these issues.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: So that's going to go forward to actually

making changes to the SLDC at some point in the future?

MS. BEAM: Correct. And I believe the goal is within the next year and a half year. I'm looking at Alex regarding the timeline.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yeah, we ought to work diligently to get those to happen rather than wait.

Thank you.

MS. BEAM: Sure.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Any other questions? We have a comment/question in the back.

GLENN SHIFFBAUER: Thank you. And just as a reply to Commissioner Cacari Stone, Glenn Schiffbauer with the Santa Fe Greene Chamber of Commerce. We have about 120 businesses that are part of the Certified Water Wise Program in the City. We have in the past discussed what we can do in the County. It's my understanding that you don't have a great number of businesses that are part of your water utility. A lot of the resorts and hospitality businesses have their own wells. That said, in our participation in the lodgers association, there is an appetite, I believe, of the sustainability culture with these properties. So, even if they're on a well, and there isn't a cost necessarily that is impacting what their water usage might be, they are hoping to be viewed as good stewards of our natural resources. And I think that there is some opportunity there. Whether it saves the County necessarily water, it really would impact the aquifer in some ways.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. Anyone else? Yes.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Jacqueline. This just kind of a thought came to me. Sorry if you had actually addressed it but and thank you for sharing about the Water Wise Program that the Green Chamber is doing on its own. Is there a water-wise or equivalent program for agriculture? Meaning a training program for agricultural producers who, you know, obviously need a certain amount of water to plant and grow but may not need as much as they are allotted and use. And so I know that the majority of our water use goes to agriculture across the state. Santa Fe has some in the south and in the north. And this maybe is better as a statewide program, but is there something akin to that in Santa Fe County?

MS. BEAM: Commissioner, we work more and more closely with Healthy Soils New Mexico, and I would say that they come the closest to teaching workshops and working directly with farmers on increasing healthy soils and irrigation, innovative irrigation ideas. But it's mainly through the lens of how to increase the soil health. And so off the top of my head, and full transparency feel like I'm trying to catch up in the water world right now because we've been so focused on energy. And so that is something I definitely want to work with aggregate and Growth Management and Joseph who focuses more on agriculture and food security in ways that we can start providing those opportunities together.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Yeah, that's interesting. I mean, an idea might be that the Commission tour a site where they do soil health training. I don't know very much about it, so I would be interested to personally learn more. But also, as I understand it, the healthier the soil, the more it retains sort of the natural humidity, liquid.

So I think that's something that we would be it's worth us pursuing even if it's not, you know, in the short-short term. Thank you.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: With regard to that and there's one when we talk about going out and getting grants, finding money, etc., and I do understand that the more and I'm hesitant to use the word traditional because it's not traditional, but it is the way that the U.S. has been doing food systems and there is an appetite. I like when we talk about water and food that we talk about appetites, let me just tell you, it happens all the time with everything because we take deep dives when we talk about water. I'm just saying. But that being said, the Extension Office, this is their job. There are federal dollars, lots of federal dollars that require their presence in our communities and require that every state has an extension and that it comes from the Land Grant Institution. And when I say their traditional ways, the way that agriculture has been done, just, you know, pour it and burn it. You know, just use it up and it'll evaporate and it doesn't matter because we're going to get as much of whatever we get, we're doing it. But we have a very good Extension Office. And I think our opportunity knowing that they that the NMSU world being our Land Grant Institution is both a resource and an opportunity to have them work within our values because the president of that institution made visits to all of the agricultural communities including ours and Commissioner Greene and I were there is something to be said for if Healthy Soils is doing a lot of work and we're looking for donations to do things, how will they work with us within our values to help support healthy soils and water etc. So I say that in as a recognizing their presence because I haven't heard any anything yet when we talk about agriculture and that's critical and important. Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Sort of along those lines. You know we have an old school tradition of flooding acequia agriculture which works but is wasteful, right. And so I've seen a study decades ago that said that by doing drip irrigation and converting, still using the acequias to utilize the water but then doing converting farms into drip irrigation can cut water use by 2/3 or even 3/4 and so maybe there's program to help modernize some of the farms in Santa Fe County so that they can conserve water. There may be a benefit we should study that you know is to how we can you know allow that water to be reused for whatever other use other than agriculture but more effectively and more efficiently. It helps with weeding. It helps with a whole bunch of things in drip irrigation as opposed to just flooding. So I don't know --

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: That's already been the case and they've been doing that with the Extension Offices now. So it's very much part of the discussion but I appreciate that. And flood irrigation isn't the primary way of doing agriculture but that's a whole other conversation. Appreciate it.

MS. BEAM: Yeah. And if I might add there are some interesting studies on flooding that you actually do increase the soil health when you flood as opposed to drip irrigation. And in California, they stopped flooding and they found that their aquifers weren't being recharged. And so I think it depends, it's a case-by-case basis, depending upon how close you are to that water entering the acequia and whether it's, you know, it's not a general blanket concept that we can throw over everything.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: That's why I said we need to study it.

Exactly.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. Did anyone else have anything else to say? Otherwise, the next thing that we have is information on the Next Generation Water Summit and a speaker from WPAC.

MS BEAM: Laird Graeser.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Laird, thank you.

#### **B. Next Generation Water Summit 2026**

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: The other thing that I would like to share with you all is the WPAC is working on their annual plan, the work plan. And one of those that was brought to my attention on Saturday at a community breakfast is the identification a 10-year work plan to map all of the arroyos in Santa Fe County with the intent to install flood control and aquifer recharge measures which is brilliant because the flood control the flooding has caused damage meanwhile it just runs away and it is not recharging. So that's a huge opportunity and I loved hearing that. Laird, thank you.

LAIRD GRAESER: My name is Laird Graeser and I started working for the State in 1986 as Chief Economist for the Tax Department. Now the Tax Department has an enormous amount of numbers and only a little information. So my job for the last 35, 40 years has been to convert data into understanding. So when I was first appointed by Commissioner Bustamante to the Water Policy Advisory Committee the first thing I asked is where are we? And so what I am about to tell you here is a result of a very preliminary analysis of where we are.

My tradition has always been you can't manage what you can't measure. So our Water Policy Advisory Committee, with my urging, has tried to get more involved in the numbers of what we are doing. Our job is basically to make policy recommendations. But still in all numbers are important. Mostly in these workshops and as in the Water Policy Advisory Committee we focus more on the City, County and the north part of the County. But there's lots of ways that we are using water in the County. So, domestic, sanitary, irrigation, commercial, livestock, mining, and public systems. So, my question was, how much are each of those components using?

So, I'm not going to go through this. I want to get right to here. The primary data source is called points of diversion, and it's quite current. I found some September wells listed in the Santa Fe County data on this point of diversion available from the Office of State Engineer. So the first thing I wanted to know was can we geo locate the wells in Santa Fe County and the answer is with this points of diversion we can do a reasonably good job of knowing where the wells are. Is that going to help us use or get the withdrawals in terms of acre-feet or gallons? No. But that's the next step. So, I want to just go over this a little bit. 21,000 of the 222,000 total wells listed in the POD statewide, we have about 10 percent of them, 21,677. Now, this data goes back a long way. There's some 1,775 water rights in this database, but of the 21,000, 7,000 are really inactive. So either plugged or dry or cancelled or no water rights or showing 0 percent or zero feet depth. So that leaves us with 12,572 active domestic wells. Now this includes multiple and also combined. There's a category called domestic livestock and there's a domestic

sanitary but you go through this now livestock is very, very big this does include domestic livestock. Commercial 138; sanitary and this includes domestic sanitary I'm not quite sure what that category is but as I say this is this is kind of the first investigation in my way. So I will probably learn more about that later. Irrigation and this is this is not – remember wells are groundwater not surface water and our acequias for the most part are surface water. So it's kind of interesting, 343 irrigation wells. Where are they? At this point, I don't quite know, but I will tell you that within some period of time, I will be able to give you a map of where the irrigation wells are. So, you go through this and basically this is a very, very interesting thing. But what do we do with it? The answer is – as a side note on that last database, almost 3,700 wells have been adjudicated mostly in the NPT basin. That's the Nambe, Pojoaque, Tesuque Basin. And now I must I think at least that that must have something to do with the Aamodt Case because the adjudications are also listed in the Water Masters data and reports. So, of this, interestingly enough, of our of our roughly, you know, 12,000 wells, 4,352 are listed in that NPT area. And the other interesting thing was it pretty much goes to Alex's point which is this database also because it's quite current you can find out how many wells by year have been permitted and drilled. So this little statistic is 416 wells have been completed since January 1, 2020. So in a four and 3/4 years, 416 wells, important, but it's not overwhelming. So a lot of the wells in the County are historic or at least you know even mine I drilled mine in '93. So all of a sudden I have more than 25 years. Then I will go forward. Okay.

So now we need to close the loop of those wells. How much are we withdrawing either as surface water or as groundwater? And there this is a once every five year state effort and it is it's called the Water Report and unfortunately it is by the time it gets published it's already pretty old. The 2020 data was only published for public consumption around April or May of 2025. So, one of my thoughts was, can we either at water policy or with the assistance of staff somehow advance that because as we all learned with our RBA training, we need to propose projects and then close the loop to the point where we can measure whether our policies have had any influence on conservation or whatever we want to do; utilization, graywater systems, whatever. So, this was my effort to kind of present this water data in a way that we could get some information out of and that might lead to methods for advancing this.

Let's go through this because it's really important and the way it's organized is surface water, groundwater, total water and then we have some information about how does this compare to the state. So public water supply, and this is almost exclusively as you see it's 25 percent in terms of surface water but mostly 53 percent or rather – 25 percent of the total surface water the 28,000 acre-feet is devoted to public water supply. And then in terms of groundwater, that's 53 percent of this of the County's use of groundwater is the public water supplies. So that's interesting. Now in terms of total water roughly a third of the withdrawals are the public water supplies. This includes all of mutual domestics and City and County and the Eldorado mutual domestic and the Edgewood mutual domestics and the mutual domestics out of Cerrillos and Galisteo. So pretty interesting.

And the last thing is I thought I would compare this our usage in terms of the

percentage of the State's water. How does that compare to our population ratio? And so in most cases we're doing pretty well. But the next category I'm particularly interested in because, Jacqueline particularly and the other County staff are struggling with this requirement that the domestic users, the domestic well users report to the County. Well, I shouldn't go on public record, but I've only reported my usage twice. Once when I drilled the well and once when I replaced all of the internal plumbing. I'm not even sure I what was interesting is when I reported the change in a meter which I had done roughly 12, 13 years into my wells lifetime. I had a hard time finding where in the Office of State Engineer I should report and they took my report and said thank you very much. I almost thought that she pushed put it into the waste basket.

So this is probably the most intriguing chart and it comes from doing a geolocating of the POD data and the light blue is 0 to 25 wells per section. The mid blue is 25 to 50 wells per section. And finally, the dark blue is more than 50. There's a few sections that have over a hundred, but not enough to make it worthwhile. I can do this same chart for irrigation or for any of the other categories. And I will probably do this for the water policy. Is this not an interesting chart?

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Laird, is this a chart or a map?

MR. GRAESER: It is an Excel chart where I have tried to simulate the map. So you do have map coordinates on the left side and the top which gives township and range and then internally within the 36 sections in – so you have to kind of infer that but it it's really an Excel product. I will be very happy to discuss any questions.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you and I understand this will be available online as well.

MR. GRAESER: We can certainly do that.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Do we have any questions for Laird?

MORI HENSLEY: Thank you so much. My name is Mori Hensley. I'm the executive director of the Santa Fe Watershed Association. Really fascinating presentation, Laird. Thank you.

I was wondering where public fill stations come into play in these numbers. I've been learning recently about the growing need for these fill stations, but also the challenge of measuring how much water is being used, where that water is going, what that water is being used for, how to incentivize conservation, but also as the wells of County residents throughout different parts of the county are drying up or the water quality is decreasing, we're seeing an increasing dependence on these fill stations. So, I'm wondering how the numbers of usage compare with the other categories you were measuring or if you've come up against any challenges understanding those numbers and what we can understand for future projections given that wells are still drying up that there's some complexity in rural water use and dependency on these fill stations. Thank you.

MR. GRAESER: Yeah, I think what you're basically telling me is I need to go forward with my data analysis project. I have downloaded the 2005, '10, '15, and '20 water reports and I noticed some trends, but the real hard part of that is that the agricultural component of which in 2020 was 60 percent of the total use of water in Santa Fe County was ag. But the '5, '10, '15 and '20 reports are all over the map because the

methodology of the report has to do with how much rain. So it's a combination of how many acres in any particular crop and how much water do any particular crop take but then you have the possibility of a lot of rain and when you don't have rain then you have to use groundwater. But that's the first thing that I noted that the annual is just all over the map. But that's why I kind of want to figure out if we can do that on a more current basis. Now will that lead to any sort of policy recommendations? I'm not sure. On the other hand, if you don't know what you're what you're using, how can you make good policy recommendations? Now my colleague Peter [Gowan] here is very strongly of the opinion that I am spinning my wheels here because our job at WPAC is policy recommendations and my insistence or at least my interest in the data is really outside of our scope. So the question is can we encourage somebody on staff to take over this job? As much as I love my daughter-in-law, that's not a task that I want to assign that to add to her overall burden.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: And so we appreciate that and I think everybody understands how can you set policy on things you can't measure. I think you said it up front. So appreciate that. Are there any other questions, comments or concerns?

MANAGER SHAFFER: If I could add to that, Chair Bustamante. So relative to the bulk water filling stations that Santa Fe County currently operates, well one that we currently operate and the two I believe additional ones that should come online soon, that usage would show up in the public water system data because that would count as part of the water supply that is produced and delivered by the Santa Fe County Public Water Utility. So, that's where you would capture that data. Relative to, the customers I'd defer to our Public Works Department Director Brian Snyder but we do know who's using the water because they have to set up accounts with the County and they're billed for the water that they in fact utilize. So, I did want to provide that specific response to your questions.

Looking further field in terms of things that the County is actively pursuing is we will be bringing forward to the Board of County Commissioners in 2026, I believe, a reclaimed Water Master plan to get guidance as to how the Board may want to utilize the increasing supply of reclaimed water through our water reclamation facility on state penitentiary grounds. A suggestion I would anticipate would be that that water be made available for commercial users who need water for dust suppression purposes but don't need potable water for that purpose. So I just wanted to bring that tie back relative to ways in which the County is actively exploring ways as to how to use treated effluent. And, Brian, if I got any of that wrong just raise your hand and correct me. Thank you.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you, Manager Shaffer. Commissioner Greene.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Thank you for that presentation. It was interesting to get into the detail and the data. this is something that's useful for us and so it's appreciated and if there is sort of consensus within the Commission to have that brought in house we should discuss that because I think that that's a useful bit of information and it's a baseline for our future growth, right. So to understand where we're going with this and sort of to that point there's two things: one is surface water, right. So this is all groundwater water and surface water is a big player in agriculture. I was

surprised to see 60 percent of groundwater was being utilized for agriculture. That was a surprise. I figured that would be just a incremental very small amount but I was surprised. And then I think also for us to understand how the surface water is – we're going to be shifting in the north when the Aamodt project when the Pojoaque Basin project comes online that over time we'll start to move some people away from groundwater and into surface water. So I think there's a great baseline that you're creating and we can start to understand where we over time we move this thing. So I appreciate the work and thank you.

MR. GRAESER: There's also a fascinating report dated 2024 from the Water Master primarily on the NPT. I'm on my second reading and I'm getting about 20 percent of what I'm reading. It'll take some more time. It's a very, very technical report, but it's fascinating because it also tells you about the adjudication in the NPT and it goes to river flows. It goes to just a whole lot of interesting data.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. And just to recognize these are volunteers. I'm grateful. We're very grateful for the work that you all do, especially those of you who are in the room right now and everyone who is unable to be with us today. Any other questions, comments, or concerns?

MS. CLIFFORD: Thank you. Hi, thank you, Commissioners. To this point that Commissioner Greene just made, which is such a good one. Eldorado tracks our groundwater very closely for obvious reasons that have been made public very often. I think 260 wells is a lot. We have 291 wells exactly at this moment within the Eldorado service area. And all those straws in the ground are allowed to take 3 acre-feet per the laws from the State Engineer. As someone who worked for that organization prior, this is just a comment about the podfinder which is that it is not as updated as you have pointed out, very astutely might I add, sir. Thank you for doing that. And it would be very helpful I think across our organizations to share our data because as I said we in Eldorado are tracking this very closely. Because we are we are going to start making active moves to try and communicate to customers the great benefits of not exploiting the groundwater use. And I'm using that word very intentionally because it is exploitation and we as communities can come together. The only word that's coming to my mind is to regionalize and I understand regionalization is like pumpkin pie. Okay. Not everybody likes it. There's a ton of ingredients there. They can all be mixed together and you might be like very hesitant at first. I would be sometimes my mom makes apple pumpkin pie and I'm like I don't know mom about that. Anyway, it's just a metaphor for that regionalization can take many forms. It can have many ways of displaying. And anyway, this is one way may perhaps our organizations can partner and transmit data, try to find the best ways to convince public members who have private domestic 72-12 wells to report their data like you're describing, to meter their data with Smart meters so we can track more efficiently the drop-by-drop usage. I know there has been a lot of questions from Eldoradans about why our district is switching to Smart metering and how important that is for us all to be responsible desert dwellers. And anyway, I just think it's so important.

I agree with you. You cannot make informed decisions without good data. And anyway, I fully support this effort. It's not a question. It's just an ask to work together.

And I'm happy to be supportive of any of WPAC's initiatives. So, thank you.

MR. GRAESER: Among other of my little projects has been to put together a list of all 83 active water systems and commercial users in the County and at some point I will probably do something with that list. But the first thing would obviously be simply to contact all of the users who are required to report to OSE and see if we can talk them into reporting simultaneously whenever they do report to OSE to report to the County. So that would allow us to update that public water system line in the water report on an almost current basis. Yes.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. If there are no further comments, do we have any online? Okay, we have an announcement.

MR. FRESQUEZ: This presentation along with every other presentation that was presented during this meeting, this two-day forum, is available by scanning the QR code if you're in this room or I sent a link through the chat on Teams and if you go to [santafecountymn.gov/santafecountywater](http://santafecountymn.gov/santafecountywater), they are available there as well.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you.

MR. GRAESER: And I was not on the agenda, so I apologize for taking your time.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: No, sir, we're grateful. Thank you. Thank you very much.

## 7. **“Looking Forward – Building Our Water Future”**

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: So at this point, that concludes the presentations and we did have something on the agenda that said we would have conversation. I think the hardness of this the issue with the conversation is we've allowed questions and comments throughout. So, we won't really open it up that way. As well as we have a substantial number of people online. We do have a page of questions and answers that were received in advance of these meetings. And instead of reading them out to you and answer them in present time, we're going to post those questions and answers online so people can see the answers to all of those questions.

So, I will at this time entertain any closing remarks that anyone would like to make. I'm going to start with just a boatload of gratitude for everyone who put their time aside to make this happen. It's been a long question. It'll continue to come up, but now we also have a resource online that we can direct people to to get some of those answers. And the recommendations that have been made and will continue to be worked on through the WPAC are powerful. So, I'm grateful for that work as well. So, right now, just opening it to any closing comments. Let's start with Sage Bird and then we'll come to the Commissioners.

MS. BIRD: Thank you for all the work you all do. I would just like to suggest that a fund be created to be able to consult with the people, the original people of this territory because there are some like charts of waterfall hundreds of years ago and honestly when the rain dance was prohibited, it literally stopped raining in this area and you can see it in scientific data chart. And so really maybe find a stipend to be able to consult with the people that can help you find solutions. And also look to the 10 most

sustainable cities in the world who are leaders in water management practices cuz we can use their best practices in help this area and some of those cities are Denmark in Copenhagen, Denmark, Singapore, in Australia in Berlin, Germany and even in New York, in the U.S., and we can replicate that for our county in a way that makes sense for this spot. And I do suggest you find resources to get help to find the solutions.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you, Sage. Anyone else? Commissioner Greene.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: So, I'd like to thank everybody who took part of this. This was great from all different aspects, first off. Second, I don't think that we touched on this really, and I would hope that we could start to look at this maybe for the next version of this, which is not on quantity and supply, supply and demand, but on quality, right? That becomes a new aspect that we're really dealing with in the La Cienega area up in part of the NPT Pojoaque Basin area there are all sorts of areas where you know when we look at we see that the chromium plume is getting closer to San Ildefonso property that means it's if it's in San Ildefonso it's in Santa Fe County and so we need to start looking at, I would call it a risk factor, and maybe some more some look at quality issues and other risk factors such as climate change and how we can really provide some guidance for ourselves when/if water gets cut off through San Juan-Chama or gets cut off from Buckman Direct or other different pools that we have, no pun intended, that we need to make sure that we have contingency plans and understand the risks there. So I don't know if that's obviously we don't have time today but that's an interesting thing for us to understand in the future.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. I think it's integral to the work and I appreciate the comments. Commissioner Cacari Stone.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Yes. I just want to thank everyone who organized this and for you Chair Bustamante also for pushing this forward as part of our agenda. It's been very rich and I just want to offer some observations some key themes that did come from the public on the questions online: water supply and sources was one of the major themes; conservation and reuse was a second one; development growth and land use, the third; the fourth, infrastructure, governance and equity, and; the fifth theme from questions and comments online were risk resiliency and partnerships. And I think it's important and I'd like to offer the commitment and we explore as a BCC how we review all our notes. There was some I think innovative ideas that came from our staff, from the City, from engineers and we look at what's possible and feasible in terms of inform informing our future actions as a BCC.

I think one thing in terms of my observations is that transparency is an opportunity here. How we make decisions, how many years, what data we use. And I like Laird's comments around we have to be able to measure it if we want to do something about it. I think that's important. Equity matters as we think about our rural and less served communities. So I was very pleased to hear we're going to be focusing on rural areas moving forward as well.

There's this tension as a BCC and my observation between growth versus resources and I think that remains as we think about strategic planning and the Sustainable Growth Management Plan updates. The third observation is that we can

remain and be proactive and a leader and that multi-jurisdictional collaboration and partnerships do matter with water resiliency. And I think we're doing some of that up north as well as in your district, but how can we explore that even more with the City and with the State and with tribes and pueblos? And finally, how do we evaluate what we're doing? That seems to be a missing link in my observation across our different departments and units. And how do we evaluate our impact? And I'll end with Alex's question around how do we manage, in a way that we have water for our future generations. And that brings in what Herbert had mentioned which I'm so onboard with and keep pushing: how do we create an approach that is centered on indigenous knowledge basis and systems that looks at the interconnectivity of water. Water is life is not just a saying. It is rooted in core values and how do we revisit the core values of our communities so that we as a BCC can ensure water for future generations. Thank you.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: Thank you, Commissioner. Any other takeaway comments that anyone would like to make?

MS. HENSLEY: Thank you so much. I just wanted to share that I think one thing and I wasn't able to attend the first day so this might have been touched on but the complete intersection of fire and headwaters forest management with water supply. And I know that there is very legitimate concern among the County of forest treatments but I think it's really important for the County to be part of these conversations both within in the headwaters that are in the County itself, but also the headwaters that the county depends on in the San Juans. And there are partnerships that I know for one, the Santa Fe Watershed Association and many other partners are part of the greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition and I haven't seen a County representative at those meetings for many years. And so I really invite you to invest in those partnerships. the Rio Grande Water Fund or you know there are numerous partnerships but I think it's really important for you all to be at the table investing in water quality and water supply from our headwaters ecosystem. So as a future topic I think that that's another really important component. So hope to see you at the greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition meeting and other collaboratives. Thank you.

CHAIR BUSTAMANTE: That is so critically important right now and it's an understatement but anyone who's sitting in here who hasn't been paying attention to what's happening in Mora right now it's huge this can burn and absolutely affect everything that we've been talking about. So I appreciate that more than you'll know. So thank everyone. Do we have any comments online?

No, no comments online.

The questions and answers that came up and thank you Commissioner Cacari Stone for providing us the outline of those areas of questions will be online and there will be a place for comment and continued mulling around and I'm grateful for the expertise that Santa Fe County has. I think it's an excellent request, recommendation, necessary effort to be at those fireshed conversations as well. Thank you. Thank you all.

## 8. Concluding Business

- A. **Announcements** – None were offered.
- B. **Adjournment**

Santa Fe County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Continuation of October 27, 2025 Special Meeting  
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Commissioner Greene moved to adjourn and Commissioner Hughes seconded.  
By unanimous [5-0] voice vote, this meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Approved by:

  
Camilla Bustamante, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners

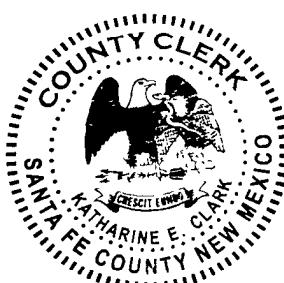
ATTEST TO:

  
KATHARINE E. CLARK  
SANTA FE COUNTY CLERK

Respectfully submitted:  
Karen Farrell, Wordswork

COUNTY OF SANTA FE ) BCC MINUTES  
STATE OF NEW MEXICO ) PAGES: 33  
I hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for  
record On The 22ND Day Of December, 2025 at 02:50:17 PM  
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 2073902  
If The Records Of Santa Fe County

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office  
Deputy  Katharine E. Clark  
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM



SFC CLERK RECORDED 12/22/2025