

# The Aamodt Settlement Agreement

November 6, 2015



Santa Fe County supports the Aamodt Settlement Agreement because it is in the best interest of both Pueblo and non-Pueblo water rights owners. Accordingly, the County agreed to make substantial financial contributions, help with implementation, and be the operator and fiscal agent of the new water utility.

## **Background**

The Rio Pojoaque Basin is chronically short of water. Filed in 1966, the Aamodt case will quantify all Pueblo and non-Pueblo water rights in the basin and establish their priority dates.

The State, United States, County, City of Santa Fe, and the Pueblos of Nambe, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso and Tesuque signed, and Congress approved, the Aamodt Settlement Agreement, which resolves the Pueblos' claims and provides other benefits.

## **Why Santa Fe County Supports the Aamodt Settlement Agreement:**

- Protects traditional agriculture and acequias
- Protects non-Pueblo water rights
  - Affords all non-Pueblo water right owners the opportunity to prove the full amount of their water rights
  - Creates a 0.5 acre-feet per year (afy) presumption for domestic wells, not otherwise restricted, regardless of actual beneficial use; 0.5 afy  $\approx$  162,900 gallons/year  $\approx$  13,570 gallons/month; the average County utility residential customer uses approximately 0.18 afy  $\approx$  60,000 gallons/year  $\approx$  5,000 gallons/month
  - Allows domestic well right owners to elect to continue using their well or connect to the regional water system
  - Provides priority-call protection for non-Pueblo water rights
- Quantifies Pueblos' senior water rights
- Promotes surface flows and ecosystem health for Rios de Nambe, Pojoaque, and Tesuque

## **Why Santa Fe County Supports the Regional Water System:**

- Provide a **safe, reliable** source of potable water for both Pueblo and non-Pueblo users in a chronically water-short basin
- Imports water from the Rio Grande for both Pueblo and non-Pueblo residents with up to 2,500 afy for Pueblos and up to 1,500 afy for non-Pueblos
- Promotes economic development, both from construction and operation
  - total construction costs are estimated at \$177 million (\$ 2006)
  - federal share is  $\approx$  65%
  - Construction will create an estimated 3,350 direct and indirect jobs<sup>1</sup>
- Provides fire protection and reduces fire insurance rates
- Recharges aquifer by reducing demand on groundwater and importing surface water.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Input-Output Modeling System for the Construction Industry, 2008.