

New Mexico Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission



Update on Water in New Mexico

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Interstate Stream Commission Director Hannah Riseley-White

April 21, 2026

Drought Conditions Persist

Map released: Thurs. April 16, 2026

Data valid: April 14, 2026 at 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

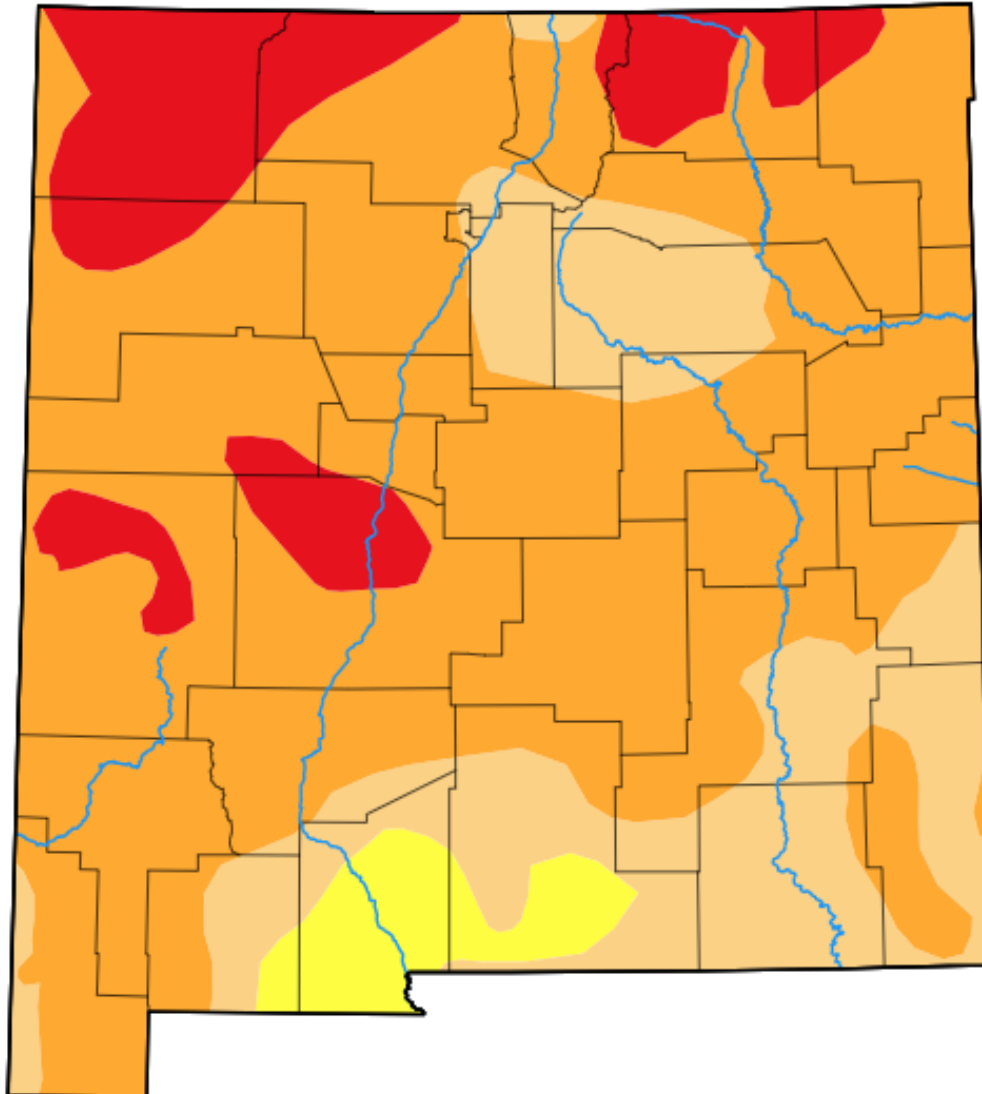
Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):

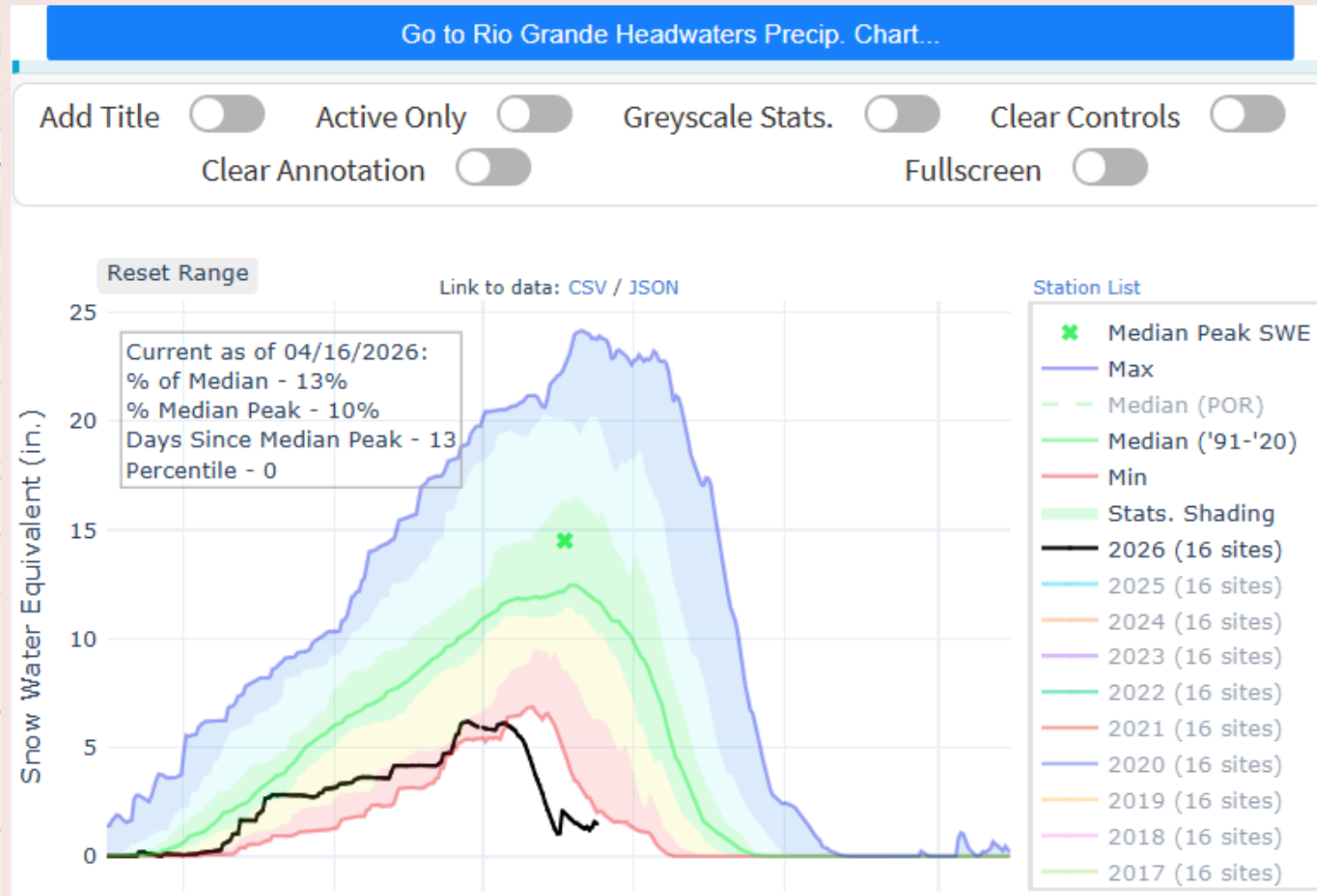
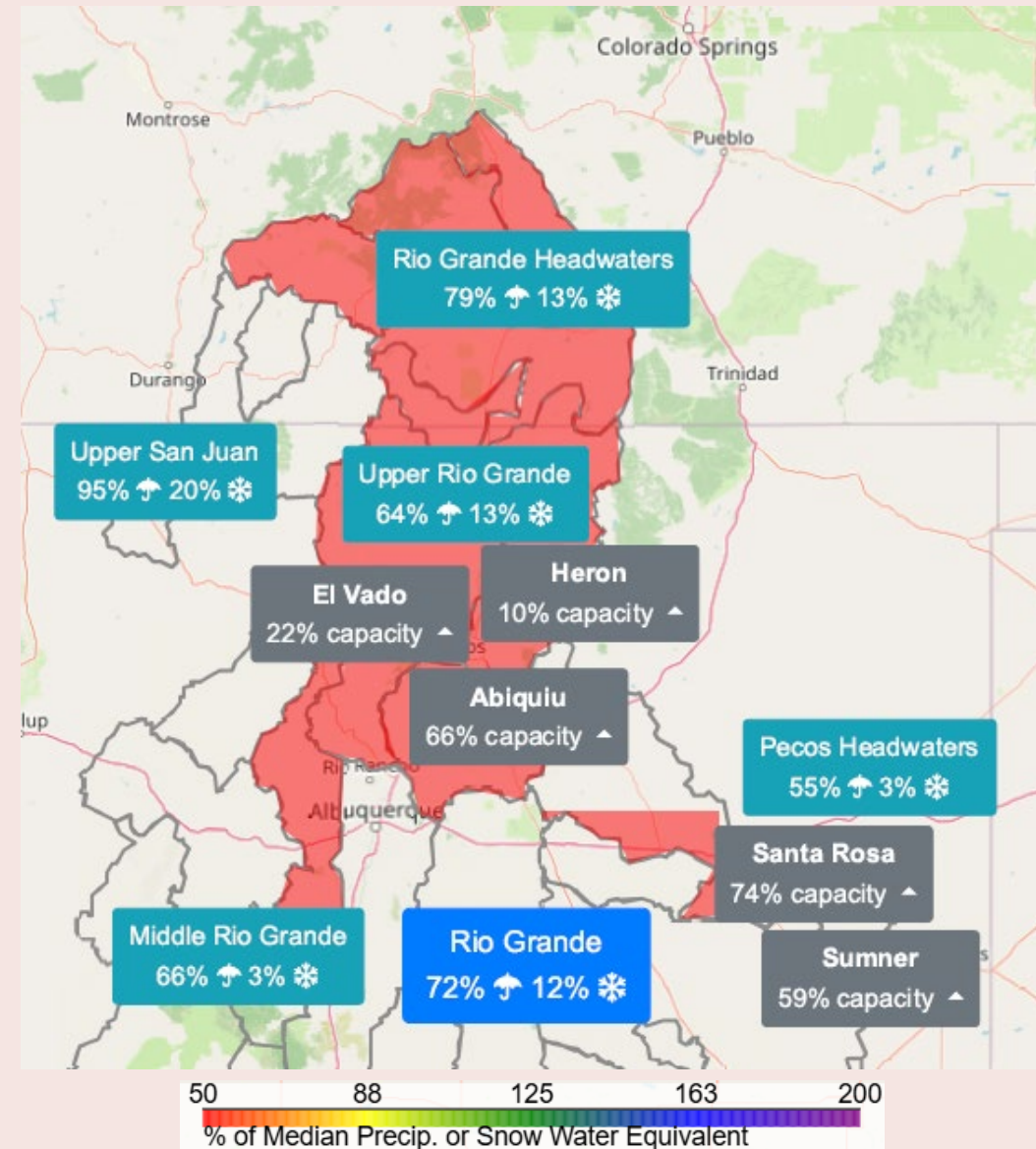
[Brian Fuchs](#), National Drought Mitigation Center

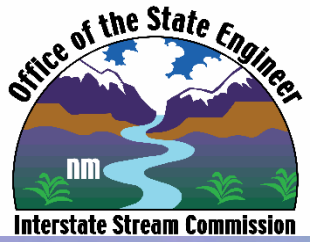
Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):

[Richard Tinker](#), NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



Current State of Snowpack in New Mexico



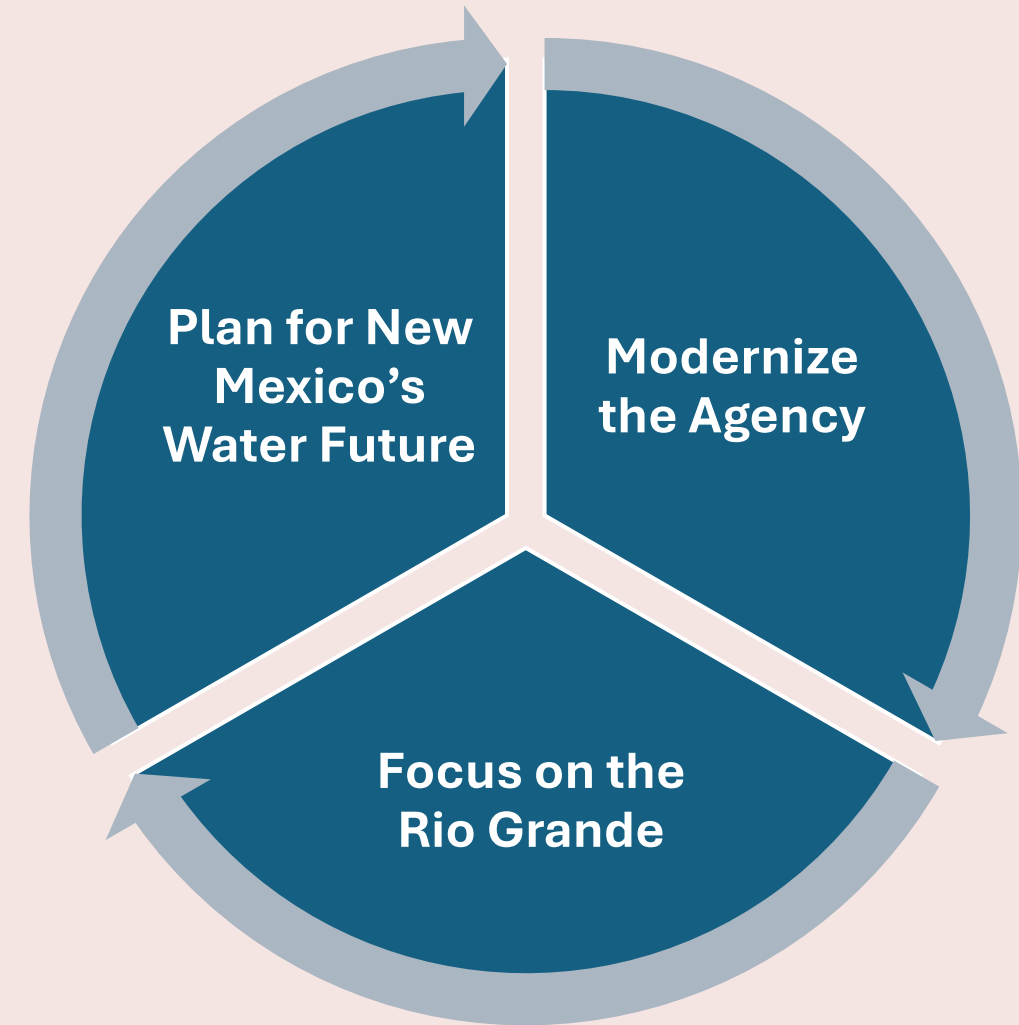


Extremely Challenging Conditions

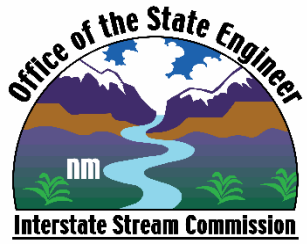


- Significant implications for water users throughout the state
- Shortage sharing and Active Water Resources Management (AWRM) operations underway
- Flooding and fire response/preparedness
- Environmental compliance challenges
- Rio Grande conditions particularly concerning:
 - Low water deliveries to irrigators and other users
 - Low allocations of Colorado River water imported through the San Juan Chama Project
 - Extensive Rio Grande drying
 - Extremely low water levels at Elephant Butte

OSE/ISC Agency Priorities

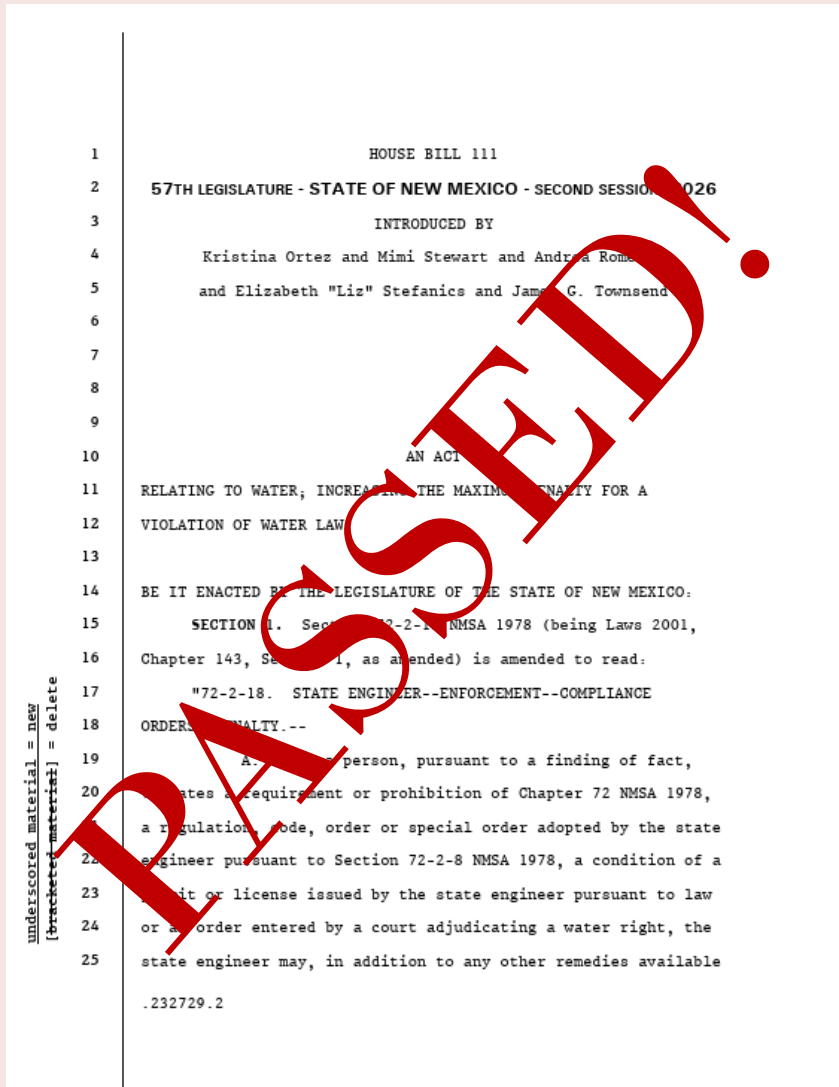


- **Modernize the Agency**
 - Water Administration
 - More metering, effective tools and water masters
 - Expedite water rights permit hearings
 - Active Water Resources Management
 - Agency Functions
 - Better use of data – Water Data Act
 - Support and resources
 - Attract and retain a talented workforce
- **Focus on the Rio Grande**
 - Lower Rio Grande Settlement Implementation
 - River Channel Conveyance and Habitat Improvements
 - Ensure Continued Compact Compliance
- **Plan for New Mexico's Water Future**
 - Progress Indian Water Rights Settlements & Adjudications
 - 50 Year Water Action Plan Implementation
 - Water Security Planning Act Implementation



2026 Legislative Session Outcomes

- Water Theft Maximum Penalty Bill (HB 111) passed
- Received funding for:
 - Enforcement Staffing
 - Measurement and Metering
 - Lower Rio Grande Settlement Implementation
 - River Channel and Bosque Management
 - Indian Water Rights Settlements
 - Strategic Water Reserve
 - Regional Water Planning
 - 50 Year Water Action Plan Implementation





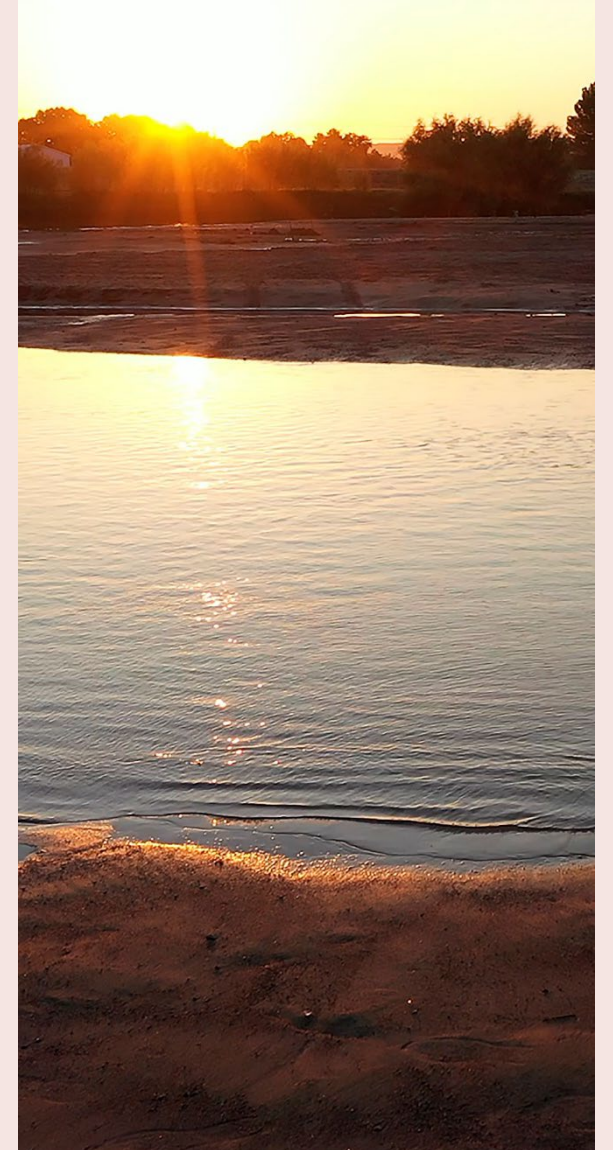
OSE/ISC FY27 Priorities – Modernize the Agency



- Reinforcing Technical Capacity throughout OSE and ISC
- Data Collection and Enhanced Management Tools
 - Expanded Metering and Monitoring
- Water Data Act Implementation
 - W.A.T.E.R.S. database update
 - Real Time Measurement System
 - New Website and Online Services
- Reduce Agency Dependency on Trust Funds
 - Irrigation Works Construction Fund (SB193 Acequia & Ditch Infrastructure Fund Transfer)
 - Improvement to the Rio Grande Income Fund

OSE/ISC FY27 Priorities – Focus on the Rio Grande

- Lower Rio Grande
 - Settlement Implementation / Aquifer Sustainability
 - System efficiency and stormwater management
 - Brackish water development
 - Community and stakeholder engagement
- Upper and Middle Rio Grande
 - Upcoming Middle Rio Grande Metering Order
 - River Channel Maintenance, Habitat Restoration, and Flood Control Projects
 - Strategic Water Reserve
 - Sediment Management
 - Rio Chama and Elephant Butte Delta Channel





OSE/ISC FY27 Priorities – Plan for Our Future



- 50 Year Water Action Plan
 - Water Conservation
 - Water education (general public, K-12, water workforce)
 - New Water Supplies
 - Strategic Water Supply
 - Water and Watershed Protection
- Water Security Planning Act
 - Rulemaking complete, guidelines and convening in 2026
 - Prioritized recommendations for funding
 - Water Security Tribal Advisory Council
- Settlements & Adjudications
 - Indian Water Rights Settlements

Approximately 25% less water in NM streams over the next 50 years

National Water Stress Index

NEW MEXICO BUREAU OF GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
Bulletin 164 2022

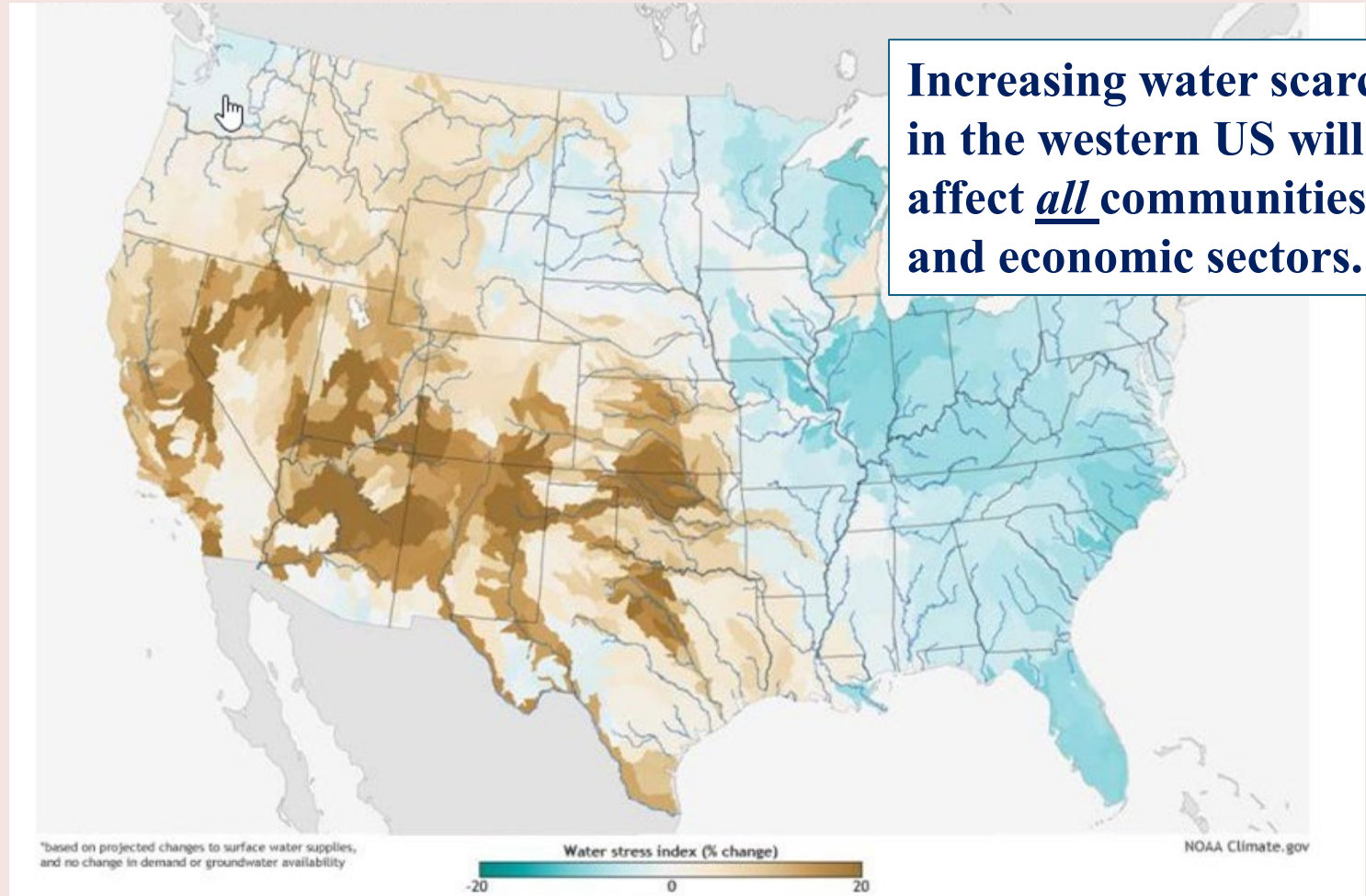
Climate Change in New Mexico Over the Next 50 Years: Impacts on Water Resources

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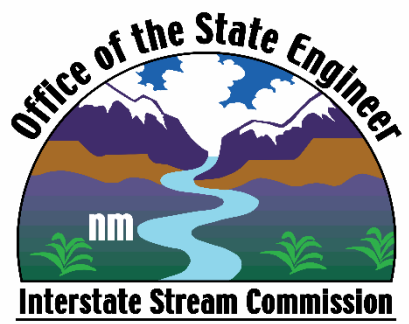
WATER RESOURCES



Increasing water scarcity
in the western US will
affect all communities
and economic sectors.

Projected change in water stress by mid-century (2040-2061) compared to historical average (1900-2668 1970). Lindsey, 2013.

Image from [Climate Change in New Mexico over the Next 50 Years: Impacts on Water Resources](#)



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Thank you