

ACEQUIA PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2023 SESSION

NEW MEXICO ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION 12/10/22

INFRASTRUCTURE

INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION ACEQUIA PROGRAM

Since the 1980s, the ISC has operated an acequia program with the purpose of providing construction funds for acequia projects and providing cost share for federal programs.

In 2019, this program was formalized in statute with the Acequia and Community Ditch Infrastructure Fund (ACDIF) with \$2.5 recurring revenue from the Irrigation Works Construction Fund to provide planning, design, and construction.

The ISC Acequia Program also administers all acequia Capital Outlay projects.

Recommendations for 2023:

1. Amend the ACDIF to increase recurring appropriation from \$2.5 million to \$5.0 million and add disaster recovery to the purpose of the fund.
2. Special appropriation of \$10 million for disaster response recovery to address 2022 floods statewide.
3. Create an Acequia Bureau at ISC with dedicated staff to operate the acequia programs. Add 3.0 FTE.

GOVERNANCE

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The New Mexico Acequia Commission (NMAC) was created in 1990 to serve as an advisory body to the legislature and governor. The NMAC meets monthly, has 11 members, and a budget of \$88,000 per year.

The Acequia and Community Ditch Education Program (ACDEP) is a line item in DFA Special Appropriations. It has been funded in HB 2 since 2007 to support acequia community education and technical assistance. The New Mexico Acequia Association, a tax exempt non-profit, has received this contract every year through a competitive bidding process. The program is funded at \$500,000 per year.

Recommendations for 2023:

1. The NMAC is requesting one FTE.
2. Increase the ACDEP with an additional \$300,000 to increase services related to infrastructure planning, financial compliance, and disaster recovery.

LEGAL DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The Acequia and Community Ditch Fund (ACDF) was created in the 1988 to support acequias in the adjudication process with attorneys and experts. (Originally at DFA then moved to NMDA in 1991.) An annual grant process awards funds to regional associations for their common defense. The ACDF is receiving around \$800,000 per year.

Recommendations for 2023:

1. Increase the ACDF an additional \$250,000 for a total of around \$1 million per year to meet unmet needs for legal and expert assistance. The number is based on requests in recent years.

*Legislative priorities were adopted at the annual Congreso de las Acequias, on Saturday, December 10, 2022.