

## Comment SLG-02

**Bob Rosebrough**  
**1506 South Grandview**  
**Gallup, NM 87301**

May 31, 2007

Rege Leach  
Western Colorado Area Office  
Bureau of Reclamation  
835 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Suite 300  
Durango, CO 81301

**Re: The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project**

Dear Mr. Leach:

I entered my term as mayor of Gallup (2003-2007) at midstream of the decades-long efforts to secure a long-term and sustainable water supply for the eastern Navajo Reservation and Gallup, its neighbor city. I was clear from the start that my choices would not be whether, but how, to add the City's support and partnership to the concerted work by the Navajo Nation and the Jicarilla Apache Nation to plan for and secure such a water supply.

INITIAL ACTION TAKEN. One of my first actions as mayor was to establish "100-Day Initiatives" and to organize citizen task forces around these strategies:

- a. A Water Task Force was formed whose first charge was to plan for and convene a community-wide Town Hall on Water was created to include citizens both from within the City and from neighboring Native American communities, as well as experts and stakeholders who could bring good information and advice to the process.
- b. We commissioned a white paper from the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, whose Director Patty Lundstrom has served for 15 years as Chair of the intergovernmental Steering Committee for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.
- c. We then brought together over 80 community and neighboring citizens and experts for a 3-day Town Hall. The results were remarkable, both in terms of the cooperation and goodwill that was fostered and in terms of the specific recommendations brought forward to the Gallup City Council.
- d. The first recommended action, which the Council unanimously endorsed, was the formalization of the Water Task Force into an appointed "Gallup Water Board." This Board was formed, got to work immediately and has continued functioning on through the present day.
- e. The second action was to charge this new Water Board with the task of evaluating the

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City's water rate structure and recommending a short-term, mid-term and long-range financing plan that would ensure a water-secure future for the City. The Water Board took this on systematically and courageously, and brought to City Council a thoughtful and comprehensive recommendation on a financing plan best served by a revised water rate structure that would not only increase revenues for immediate and longer-term infrastructure, but would support the City's participation in the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project and at the same time encourage conservation of the precious water resource.

- f. A further action of the Water Board involved research into the short-and long-term viability of wastewater recycling utilizing advanced reverse-osmosis (*RIO*) technology, as well as continuing the pursuit of other water resources as part of the overall City water strategy. This research continues in earnest today, with some promising possibilities emerging.

BRIDGE BUILDING & PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NAVAJO NATION. Of equal or greater importance than the work of our Town Hall and our Water Board, in my mind, was the work of building bridges of friendship and partnership with our Navajo Nation neighbors, and this was another initiative at the top of my short list of priorities:

- a. I believe we made great strides in this partnership work, and the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project was a center-piece of that progress. We broke through a lot of red tape and other barriers to cooperation in order to start forging a new regional water partnership.
- b. In this new effort, we would upgrade and then use the City's water infrastructure to help convey the Navajo Nation's water supply from one place to another, thus establishing a new "Water Commons" in which all citizens would share in the region's water supply.
- c. Our first breakthrough project was a collaborative with the Navajo Nation, the Indian Health Service and the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority to convey water from the Gallup system to Navajo residents just outside the City limits along Boardman Avenue. This project has broken ground and laid pipe, and we are looking for municipal water to start flowing through those water faucets later this summer.
- d. The State of New Mexico also came to our assistance in a big way, with investments during my term as Mayor of over \$5 million in new infrastructure development that would support providing "Real Water to Real People in Real Time" – even as we awaited the advent of surface water supply in the area from the new Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project pipeline from the San Juan River.

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SUPPORT OF PLANNING REPORT & DRAFT EIS. I believe that the *Planning Report* and *Draft EIS* for this project accurately reflect the more than 15 years of work that has been done collaboratively by the Navajo Nation, the City of Gallup and their local and State partners:

- a. The project has been served with distinction by the staff of the Bureau of Reclamation, whose project leaders have exhibited professionalism and competence while supporting the initiative and leadership of the local sponsoring entities.
- b. The project has also been served with high excellence by a persevering band of technical planners, attorneys, government officials and political leaders across the participating organizations. As such, it represents a positive and effective model for intergovernmental cooperation -virtually unprecedented in this area.
- c. The complexity and cost of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project have challenged the City of Gallup to be extremely vigilant in its evaluation of water supply alternatives, financial resources for sustained water supply and other factors affecting the City's water future.
  - i. The City's potential as a participating partner and as an anchor to the Navajo-Gallup system certainly remains paramount.
  - ii. However, the assistance of Federal and State government in making this participation financially feasible will likewise be extremely important going forward.

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Thank you for considering this letter.

Sincerely,



Bob Rosebrough