

February 28, 2012

New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

Jim Dunlap, ISC Chairman
Estevan Lopez, ISC Director
Scott Verhines, State Engineer
Patricio Garcia
Blane Sanchez
Mark S. Sanchez
Julia Davis Safford
Buford Harris
James Wilcox
Phelps Anderson
Randal Crowder

Dear New Mexico Interstate Stream Commissioners:

The Gila River is vital to our economy here in southwest New Mexico. It is the last free-flowing, main-stem river in the state and one of the few remaining in the Southwest. Rich in natural and cultural history, the Gila contributes significant economic benefits to our counties through ecosystem services, enhanced property values, aesthetics, recreation and tourism, and scientific and educational opportunities. The Gila supports a naturally reproducing sport fishery and is a birding hotspot of the Southwest.

As business owners in southwest New Mexico, representing over 120 businesses, the Southwest New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce, and employing more than 400 people, we urge you to approve responsible, cost-effective non-diversion alternatives for evaluation during the 2012 – 2013 assessment phase of the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA) planning process.

We are concerned that a major water development project, such as the three currently proposed under the AWSA, are unnecessary and expensive. Studies show that the regional aquifer contains enough water to supply Silver City for hundreds of years. Deming's 2009 water plan demonstrates that it has acquired enough water rights to meet future demand over the 40-year planning period.

A Gila River diversion and pipeline project would require major infrastructure in the Cliff-Gila Valley and portions of Grant and Luna counties. This project would require a diversion dam and some combination of a huge pumping station, a power station, massive pipelines and/or canal systems and an off-stream dam and reservoir. The projected construction cost is *estimated* at \$325 million – more than double the promised \$128 million federal subsidy. The recently completed Animas-La Plata diversion and reservoir cost \$500 million, 48% over the original estimate. Taxpayers, local governments, and water users would be tapped to fund the remainder. At a time when federal, state and local budgets are spread thin, a diversion project outstrips our financial resources.

The responsible choice under the AWSA is to implement cost-effective, non-diversion alternatives, such as municipal and agricultural conservation and sustainable groundwater management. Projects such as Grant County's Regional Water Supply, water reuse projects in Deming and Bayard, and municipal and agricultural conservation all proposed under the AWSA planning process is sufficient to meet southwest New Mexico's long-term water needs at a fraction of the cost.

Southwestern New Mexico businesses should not have to pay for expensive water from a diversion and pipeline project when there are more cost-effective alternatives available. Expensive water will hurt our businesses, many of which are still struggling in the aftermath of our national economic crisis.

We have an opportunity under the Arizona Water Settlements Act to satisfy southwest New Mexico's water needs affordably, while at the same time maintaining the Gila River as a natural asset for local agriculture, tourism and recreation. It is critical that we make responsible choices for the long-term sustainability of our local economies.

Sincerely,

Lynn Aldin, Partner
Peace Meal Vegetarian Café
Silver City, NM

Charles Anderson, owner
Anderson Construction
Glenwood, NM

Shevek Barnhart, owner
Shevek & Co. Restaurant
Silver City, NM

Louis Baum, owner
A.I.R. Coffee Co. Inc.
Bayard, NM

Rich Bigelow, owner
Richard Bigelow Construction
Silver City, NM

Rachel Bighley, owner
Mark Bighley Construction
Silver City, NM

Jim Blurton, owner
Silver City KOA Campground
Silver City, NM

Gregg Bond, owner
Vicki's Eatery
Silver City, NM

Luanne Brooten, owner
Silver Spirit Gallery
Silver City, NM

Kate Brown, owner
Kate Brown Pottery and Tile
San Lorenzo, NM

Zeecha Brooks, owner
Restoration Technologies
Silver City, NM

Joshua Burke, owner
New World Building
Silver City, NM

Buck Burns, owner
Manzanita Ridge
Silver City, NM

Susan Calhoun, owner
Yada Yada Yarn
Silver City, NM

Marcia Carlson, owner
Java the Hut Espresso
Silver City, NM

Paul Castellano, owner
Silver City Trading Co.
Silver City, NM

Dan Clements, owner
Lizard Stone Builders
Silver City, NM

Van Clothier, owner
Stream Dynamics
Silver City, NM

A.T. & Cinda Cole, owners
Pitchfork Ranch
Silver City, NM

Rob Connelly, owner
Curious Kumquat
Silver City, NM

Michael Cook, owner
Michael Cook Therapeutic Massage
Silver City, NM

Dana Bates, owner
Gila Wood Products
Santa Clara, NM

Zachary Bruton, owner
Bruton Enterprises
Cliff, NM

Kelly Cranston, owner
Cranston Rentals
Glenwood, NM

Jamie and Zack Crockett, owners
Gila Backcountry Services
Gila Hotsprings, NM

April Crosby, owner
Crosby and Associates Consulting
Gila, NM

J.J. Dabbs, owner
Gila Chicken
Gila, NM

Teleah Dabbs, owner
Gila Farmers Market
Gila, NM

Karen Danhauer, owner
Land Art Landscaping
Silver City, NM

Peter Day, owner
Townside Farm
Silver City, NM

Kim Doak, owner
Intuitive Integrative Bodywork
Silver City, NM

Shelly Donovan, owner
Sundial Springs
Glenwood, NM

Lois Duffy, owner
Lois Duffy Art
Silver City, NM

Hosana Eilert, owner
Wild West Weaving
Silver City, NM

Jean Eisenhower, owner
Sun and Moon
Silver City, NM

Cheri Crane, owner
Datura Day Spa
Silver City, NM

Elizabeth Foster, owner
J. Elizabeth Foster LMT
Silver City, NM

Robin Lea Gavriel, owner
Mystic Mountain Naturals
Glenwood, NM

Asher Gelbart, owner
Green Energy Now
Mimbres, NM

Marya Gendron, owner
Plume Featherwear
San Lorenzo, NM

Steven Gillispie, owner
Army Store and More
Silver City, NM

Lee Gruber, owner
Syzygy Tileworks
Silver City, NM

Sharlene Grunerude, owner
Mimbres Farms
Hanover, NM

Ronald Hanson, owner
Two Spirit Gallery
Silver City, NM

Tyrel Harper, owner
No Excuses
Silver City, NM

Steve Harris, owner
Far Flung Adventures
El Prado, NM

Polly Hassler-Cook, owner
Javalina Coffee House
Silver City, NM

Mitchell Hellman, owner
Alotta Gelato
Silver City, NM

Lenora Elmer, owner
Lenora's Designs
Silver City, NM

Sandra Hicks, owner
Inn on Broadway
Silver City, NM

September Hood, owner
Village Massage
Gila, NM

Chelsea Hotchkiss, President
Insurance First Inc.
Silver City, NM

Tricia Hurley, owner
Lone Mountain Natives
Silver City, NM

Diana Ingalls Leyba, owner
Leyba & Ingalls Art
Silver City, NM

Susie Jerome, owner
Mule Creek Adobe
Cliff, NM

Lisa Jimenez, partner
Regalos de la Tierra Pottery
Silver City, NM

Nancy Johnson, owner
The Palace Hotel
Silver City, NM

Gwyn Jones, owner
Broad Mind Media
Silver City, NM

Mary Jovar, owner
5 AM Donuts
Deming, NM

Joseph Kenneally, owner
Great West Trails
Silver City, NM

William Knuttinen, owner
Morones & Knuttinen LLC
Silver City, NM

Jay Hemphill, owner
Gila Hike and Bike
Silver City, NM

Tatiana Kurakin, owner
Tatiana Maria Gallery
Silver City, NM

Doug Lacy, owner
Pet Health Shoppe
Silver City, NM

Kay Laramy, owner
Pots, Pans & More
Silver City, NM

David Lawrence, owner
Sun-Up Design/Build
Silver City, NM

Paul Leitner, owner
Fire Cloud Traders
Silver City, NM

Carlos Lobato, owner
Lobato's Music
Deming, NM

Sira Lozoya, owner
Masa y Mas Tortilleria
Silver City, NM

Sherri Lyle, owner
Dandelion Wish
Silver City, NM

MaryAnn Marlar, owner
Yankie Creek Coffee House
Silver City, NM

Paul Martinez, owner
Valencia Antiques
Silver City, NM

John Matas, owner
Pretty Sweet Emporium
Silver City, NM

Blaire McPherson, owner
Blaire McPherson Grant Writing
Glenwood, NM

Naava Koenigsburg, owner
Bear Creek Herbs
Silver City, NM

Rocky Mondello, owner
Morning Star
Silver City, NM

Lynn Neidermayer, owner
Neidermayer Studios
Glenwood, NM

Janet Offet, owner
Sew-N-Sew
Deming, NM

Dennis O'Keefe, owner
O'Keefe's Bookshop
Silver City, NM

Ruth Olsson, owner
The Marketplace
Silver City, NM

Bruce Parsons, owner
Reader's Cove
Deming, NM

Jake Politte, owner
1ZERO6
Silver City, NM

Dorothy Porter, owner
Hester House Candy
Silver City, NM

Diane Reed, owner
Creation & Adornments Gallery
Silver City, NM

Bryan Reedy, owner
Mimbres Valley Brewing Company
Deming, NM

Mark Richard, owner
Mark Richard and Associates
Bayard, NM

P. Arin Roberts, owner
Mola!
Glenwood, NM

Lori Mitchell, owner
Lori Mitchell Designs
Glenwood, NM

Rebecca Rosales, owner
Sunrise Kitchen
Deming, NM

Cordelia Rose, owner
Whitewater Mesa Labyrinth
Glenwood, NM

Bob Rowland, owner
Isaac's Grill
Silver City, NM

Monica Rude, owner
Desert Woman Botanicals
Gila, NM

Judith Safford, owner
Safford Massage
Glenwood, NM

Stacy Schwarz, owner
Stacy Schwarz Pottery
Gila, NM

Stephen Shelendich, owner
Silver Architects
Silver City, NM

Ron Shultz, owner
Three Dogs Coffeehouse
Silver City, NM

Nancy Spragens, owner
Seedboat Gallery
Silver City, NM

Gail Skee, owner
Mis Amigos Pet Care Center
Silver City, NM

Ellen Schweigert, owner
Santa Clara Woodworks
Santa Clara, NM

Peter Tallman, owner
Poppy's Plumbing Service
Glenwood, NM

John Rohovec, owner
Bear Mountain Lodge
Silver City, NM

Judith Truett, owner
Truett Research
Glenwood, NM

Jude Wasechek, owner
Running Horse Gallery
Glenwood, NM

Craig Wentz, owner
Wentz Electric
Silver City, NM

Bodhi Werber, owner
Diane's Restaurant
Silver City, NM

Gordon West, owner
Gila WoodNet
Santa Clara, NM

Doug Zilm, General Manager
Silver City Food Co-op
Silver City, NM

Damon Shirk, owner
Faywood Hotsprings Resort
Faywood, NM

Stephanie Padilla, owner
Mario's Pizza 7 Video
Glenwood, NM

Greene Cowan, owner
Greene Cowan Builders
Glenwood, NM

Cissy McAndrew, Executive Director
Southwest New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce
Silver City, NM

Allena Thompson, owner
Sunrise Espresso
Silver City, NM

Ginny Wolf, owner
Ginny Wolf Studio & Gallery
Silver City, NM

Catherine Wanek, owner
Black Range Lodge
Kingston, NM

Margo Wyse, owner
Margo's Bakery Cafe
Silver City, NM

Charles Yeoman, owner
Western & Mexican Emporium
Silver City, NM

K. Zarrabi, owner
Tundar Gallery
Silver City, NM

Stuart Egnal, owner
Custom Steelworks
Silver City, NM

Denise Tracy Cowan, owner
Super Salve Company
Mogollon, NM

Nancy Coates, owner
Nancy Coates Contracting
Glenwood, NM

Deborah Nordquist, owner
D & D's Organic Haven and Gardens
Glenwood, NM