

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION**

**IN THE MATTER OF
PROPOSED NEW RULE 19.25.16
NMAC – Regional Water Security Planning**

No. NMISC 25-01 (R)

**New Mexico Interstate Stream
Commission, Water Planning
Program,**

Movant.

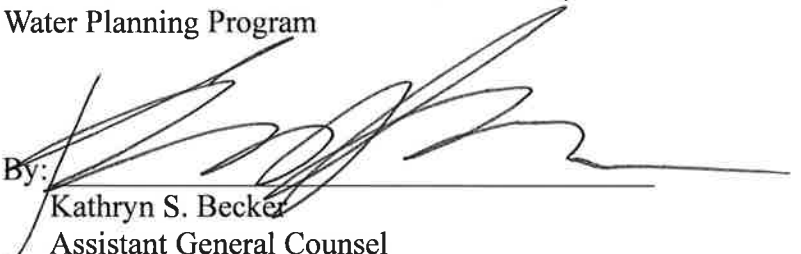
**NOTICE OF FILING OF WRITTEN DIRECT TESTIMONY
OF HANNAH RISELEY-WHITE**

The Water Planning Program (“Program”) of the New Mexico Interstate Commission hereby submits the attached Written Direct Testimony of Hannah Riseley-White.

DATED this 1st day of October, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission,
Water Planning Program

By: 

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DIRECT TESTIMONY OF HANNAH RISELEY-WHITE

I. INTRODUCTION and QUALIFICATIONS

My name is Hannah Riseley-White and I am presenting this written direct testimony on behalf of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) in support of the NMISC's Water Planning Program's Proposed Rule (Exhibit 16), as filed with the Commission on July 17, 2025. My written direct testimony will provide supporting evidence for the Proposed Rule with regards to the following topics:

- A. NMISC Mission and Planning Mandate
- B. How the Water Security Planning Act and the Proposed Rule Present a New and Needed Approach to Regional Water Planning in New Mexico
- C. Statewide Objectives
- D. The Unique Role of the Water Security Tribal Advisory Council
- E. Criticisms of the Proposed Rule and Process
- F. Opportunity to Plan Comprehensively and Collaboratively
- G. Suggested Changes to the Proposed Rule Based on Comments Received
- H. Conclusion

I am currently the NMISC Director, and I have held this position since July of 2023. Prior to serving as Director, I was the Deputy Director for approximately three years and before that I was NMISC's Pecos Bureau Chief for over three years. I have worked in resource and program management roles over the last twenty-five years. As demonstrated in my resume (Exhibit 28), I have a range of experience, education, and knowledge about water management and compliance initiatives in New Mexico.

A. New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Mission and Planning Mandate

The NMISC is administratively attached to the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE). NMOSE administers the state's water resources and therefore is charged with the supervision, measurement, appropriation and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New

Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. NMISC is charged with separate duties including protecting New Mexico's right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, or agreements between New Mexico and our neighboring states, and supporting the state in complying with each of those compacts. In addition, NMISC is tasked with supporting New Mexico in complying with various federal environmental regulations, such as the Endangered Species Act, as well as water planning and numerous other duties. The mission of the NMISC is to actively investigate, protect, conserve and develop the water resources of New Mexico, in accordance with law.

Together, NMOSE and NMISC must boldly face the challenge of balancing existing water use and considerations of the water needs of generations to come with projected reductions in water availability due to climate change. New Mexico's economic vitality and the resilience of our natural systems depend on effective management of New Mexico's water, our most precious resource. The duty and obligation of our offices is not taken lightly and the work ahead will necessarily rely on engagement of New Mexicans at all levels.

New Mexico is currently experiencing one of the most intense periods of drought on record, which began in the early 2000s. As of the date of filing this testimony, 82% of the State is in moderate to exceptional drought with 8% of the State being in exceptional drought, the most severe drought category. Aridification associated with rising temperatures is significantly increasing the challenges of managing New Mexico's already scarce water supplies. New Mexicans should expect water availability for their communities to be impacted by more frequent and longer droughts, altered seasonality for precipitation and snowpack runoff, increased evapotranspiration, and more frequent and damaging floods and wildfires. These impacts threaten all our livelihoods and increase stress on the State's diverse ecosystems.

As you will read in Andrew Erdmann's testimony, NMISC has water planning obligations related to the 2003 State Water Plan Act, the 2023 Water Security Planning Act and implementation of the 50-Year Water Action Plan. All of this work is currently guided by the scientific foundation provided by the 2022 report from New Mexico Tech, **Climate Change in New Mexico Over the Next 50 Years: Impacts on Water Resources**, otherwise known as the 'Leap Ahead Report' (Exhibit 7). I cannot over-emphasize how my day-to-day work and monthly reports to the Commission reflect a climate that is already changing and an administrative process that is working to adapt. The Leap Ahead Report predicts that over the next almost 50 years we will see a decrease of at least 25% in surface water flows and associated aquifer recharge across the state. NMISC and NMOSE must look at the State as a whole and consider thoughtfully surface water and groundwater management and the interaction of the two.

The NMISC and the NMOSE have an obligation to provide future planning regions with a solid understanding of the hydrologic and administrative realities they need to plan for, and then truly invest state resources in developing local capacity such that communities across the state can plan for and successfully meet the challenges ahead. We have the mandate. We have the process outlined in the Proposed Rule and forthcoming guidelines, and we have the funding to kick off this critical work. The Proposed Rule contemplates NMISC Staff involvement to get regional planning underway to ensure robust public engagement, appropriate representation on regional water planning councils, and accurate, scientifically based and transparent information to inform the

planning process. The NMISC's vision for re-energized regional water planning under the Water Security Planning Act (WSPA or Act) is threefold:

- support communities across New Mexico in understanding, preparing for, and responding to the impacts of climate change, including increasing water scarcity;
- focus on implementation by ensuring local buy-in, prioritizing resources where they will be most impactful, and tracking and reporting on progress; and
- ensure meaningful outcomes on the ground that improve resilience.

B. How the WSPA and Proposed Rule Present a New and Needed Approach to Regional Water Planning in New Mexico

New Mexico's first regional water planning statute passed in 1987, what followed had mixed success. The passage of the 2023 Water Security Planning Act (WSPA or Act) provides NMISC a mandate to re-envision regional water planning, including establishing a new process that has the potential to be in place for decades to come, and provides perhaps the most critical pathway to ensuring water security for communities across New Mexico already feeling the impacts of climate change. It is critical for us to get it right, and that necessarily required pursuing extensive public and tribal input.

The Proposed Rule before you today applies lessons learned from previous state-lead regional planning efforts. This approach differs in four primary ways: a balanced local vs. State-driven approach; focus on outcomes; public and tribal input in the development of the WSPA planning process; and the state in a strong supporting role for the regions.

1. **Balanced Local vs. State-Driven Approach** – The approach outlined in the Proposed Rule aims to strike a balance between locally and state driven processes that the State did not achieve in the previous planning efforts. The first round of regional planning can be characterized as a “bottom-up” approach with minimal State guidance and staff engagement with the regions. These efforts resulted in plans that were wildly different, unable to be integrated, and at times at odds with each other. The second round of regional planning took an opposite “top-down” approach, in which the NMISC dictated the technical methodology and State staff and contractors ran most aspects of the planning process to ensure consistency across plans. Neither planning cycle sufficiently tracked outcomes, making it difficult to evaluate success. This Proposed Rule aims to learn from both previous rounds of planning and strike the right balance by providing a supportive process for regional water security planning while ensuring local buy-in and engagement so that the Councils can reach substantive outcomes. The planning process and each Regional Council must have a sufficiently flexible structure and governance to determine, evaluate, compile and rank locally desirable and implementable solutions.
2. **Focus on Outcomes** – The focus of the Proposed Rule is on outcomes rather than prescribed steps to get to those outcomes. There are various potential approaches to meeting the requirements in the Proposed Rule. Each of the Regional Councils will have different water problems, resource considerations, and technical and administrative capacity. Although the State will provide support through tools and templates that can be used directly or adapted, each Regional Council will ultimately develop and follow its own methodology for

meeting the planning process requirements, including development of a water security plan with a prioritized PPP list. The statutory requirement for NMISC to report annually to the legislature provides accountability for the regional planning process itself, assists in prioritizing State resources for implementation of priority PPPs, and ensures better ongoing tracking of outcomes.

3. Public Input in the Development of the WSPA Process – Since its passage in 2023, implementation of WSPA, as well as the proposed outcomes of the planning process envisioned by the Act are driven by public and tribal input and participation. Unlike all previous regional water planning efforts, the WSPA requires, and the NMISC has ensured, that regional water planning is a transparent and inclusive process from the beginning. Throughout all the opportunities for participation – open house events, discussion draft rule and guidelines, multiple comment periods – NMISC has been focused on engaging with as many people as possible to help shape what’s next. By inviting people in from the beginning, NMISC developed the Proposed Rule and will continue to develop and refine the guidelines, such that they reflect what we heard from New Mexicans. This process was intended to provide clarity and capacity for the work to be done by the people who will benefit from it and foster collaboration between regional water users. The transparency of this process is evident in the multiple reports documenting input and described in the testimonies filed by Andrew Erdmann and Sara Fox.

Similarly, the process for achieving results in the regions themselves must be publicly driven. Section 5.B of the Act requires broad public input in the outcomes sought by each regional water planning entity. The previous rounds of regional planning did not include a requirement to invite all the relevant governing entities in a region to participate. To ensure implementable outcomes and based on the input NMISC received in the various opportunities for comment, it is essential to have local governing entities represented in the Councils alongside ranchers, farmers, mutual domestic water managers, educators, environmental and conservation-based advocates, recreational interests, industry and others. Solutions without broad participation are likely to be challenged, slowing and potentially halting opportunities for implementation. Priorities for implementation must come from local communities. Developing and bolstering local capacity requires supporting the right composition of the Councils. Effective results will be locally, rather than State, driven.

4. Robust State Support – Finally, WSPA differs from previous regional planning efforts due to the strong supporting role the state will play. Although much of the planning process and outcomes must be locally driven, as stated above, the state will provide enough guidance and support to make regional water plans helpful documents while reserving for the Councils enough autonomy to curate locally practicable and implementable solutions. NMISC expects to provide more support during the initial planning period (IPP as described in Section 10 of the Proposed Rule) by supporting the formation of Regional Councils, ongoing development and implementation of Tools and Templates, and coordination of input for the State’s convening of the regions and initial implementation of WSPA from an advisory roundtable of New Mexico’s water leaders.

After each region has an approvable first Regional Water Security Plan and has moved into the on-going planning period (OPP as discussed in Section 11 of the Proposed Rule), NMISC Planning Staff will continue to act as liaisons, navigators, and resources for Councils. Each Council will have different needs, and NMISC Planning Staff will tailor support to the needs of each region. The WSPA guidelines will establish a grant program that can be used by Regional Councils to fund planning activities.

The NMISC is committed to supporting and building on existing planning efforts. In addition, we are committed to expanding data collection, improving access to data, and further developing and making available other science-based tools and models to support regional water planning efforts, also referred to as the Tools and Templates and expanded on by Mr. Erdmann's testimony.

C. Statewide Objectives

The Proposed Rule calls for all Regional Water Security Plans to both consider and be in compliance with the following statewide objectives:

- New Mexico's obligations under interstate compacts
- Compliance with the Endangered Species Act and the prevention of serious harm to the habitats of species that are threatened or endangered under state or federal law
- Implementation of water settlements, including Indian water rights settlements
- New Mexico's existing administration plans under Active Water Resources Management

As you will read in Mr. Chakeres testimony, supporting these statewide objectives is in the public welfare of the state. As most recently argued by the NMOSE and upheld at the administrative law level, public welfare considerations include New Mexico's compact compliance. Approval by the Commission of Regional Water Security Plans will require consideration of these objectives. If a Council seeks support for a proposal for alternative administration through Active Water Resources Management, it must be submitted to the State Engineer and affected Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations for approval, as required by the WSPA in Section 4.C.9.

D. The Unique Role of the Water Security Tribal Advisory Council

The WSPA required NMISC to establish a Tribal Advisory Council for consideration in the planning process of tribal sovereignty, tribal water rights, and the water needs of tribal communities, as well as a procedure for Regional Councils to engage with the Water Security Tribal Advisory Council (WSTAC). WSTAC represents the first state-wide council focused on tribal water issues in New Mexico. While NMISC is committed to ongoing communication on a sovereign-to-sovereign basis with New Mexico's Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations the formation of WSTAC provides an additional and critical opportunity to engage with a tribal collective in shaping and implementing the WSPA.

Andrew Erdmann's testimony discusses the initial creation of WSTAC. In the Proposed Rule WSTAC will have the opportunity to engage in planning and vetting of all Plans submitted to the Commission for approval. Plans must document WSTAC involvement and any comments

or recommendations they may have related to the Plan. This is separate from and in addition to the representation of individual tribal governments as representative members on Councils related to the location of tribal lands.

The WSPA and the Proposed Rule require that there be opportunities for participation by Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations in water planning regions and NMISC is committed to making this opportunity productive and valuable. Even if a tribal government opts out of some aspects of work with a Council, the Proposed Rule provides opportunities for involvement in the development, vetting and prioritization of Projects, Plans, and Policies (PPPs). See Proposed Rule, Section 13.B.

The Proposed Rule was developed with extensive interaction and input with WSTAC, although not all WSTAC's suggestions were adopted wholly, as described in the testimony of Mr. Erdmann and Exhibits 12 and 13 regarding this communication. Supporting implementation of Indian Water Right Settlements and the recognition of federally recognized or reserved tribal water rights is one of the important duties of the NMISC. NMISC Staff are working to develop resources and build Tools and Templates on an expansive array of topics including laws, agreements, treaty rights, and methods of collaboration and informed decision making.

E. Criticisms of Proposed Rule and Process

The Proposed Rule reflects the culmination of a front-loaded public process with robust participation and support. At the start of discussions about how to develop an implementation process for WSPA, the NMISC determined it was imperative to engage as many New Mexicans as possible in this process because the success of regional water planning relies on the voluntary participation and interest of locals everywhere. Ultimately, regional water planning will not succeed without the buy-in of thousands of interested parties around the state. By starting with a large information campaign, Main Stream New Mexico, the NMISC was able to expand participation and to give New Mexicans who want to work to improve the water future for themselves and their families an opportunity to do so. The choice to deliberately engage with as many people as possible and collect as much input as possible to inform the Proposed Rule and subsequent guidelines, may have delayed the convening of Councils but the NMISC believes that robust public input was essential to ensure successful long-term outcomes.

The Proposed Rule is NMISC Staff's best effort at reflecting what we heard through the extensive public and tribal input process. However, as with any open and inclusive process, we received competing or contradictory recommendations. There is no possible proposal that would satisfy all the feedback we have received.

The three most frequent concerns raised about the Proposed Rule are:

1. Regional Councils will have too many participants to get meaningful work completed;
2. Regional boundaries do not support the needs of existing agreements, alignments, or adjudication boundaries; and
3. Self-convening councils are not sufficiently allowed to form and take swift action with NMISC funding, and that NMISC's anticipated timeline for convening the regions is too slow.

More fully:

1. Size of Councils – The concern raised is that the requirements in the Proposed Rule to invite a wide range of participants to join Councils could result in the planning process being overly cumbersome, increase potential conflicts and make it more difficult to complete and implement plans. We believe that planning must be inclusive and offer an opportunity to participate to everyone with the potential to be impacted. The requirement in the Proposed Rule is an invitation only, participation is voluntary, and although we hope there is broad participation, the Councils can proceed without representation of all the governing entities called out in the Proposed Rule. The NMISC will be supporting the Councils through development of Tools and Templates, including templates for by-laws or organizing principles that will include the options for Councils to form steering committees or workgroups to increase efficiency and ensure an effective process. Implementation of PPPs proposed in Plans will require local sponsors, and therefore, having them at the table will be critical. The proposed Councils are no larger than their Colorado counterparts and in most cases are smaller. It takes a lot of people to represent the broad, overlapping, and sometimes conflicting viewpoints New Mexicans hold about water management. Meaningful buy-in for plans, and prioritization and implementation of PPPs, relies on effective representation.
2. Regional Boundaries – The concern raised is that the regional boundaries in the Proposed Rule don't align with existing administrative, regulatory or other kinds of boundaries and/or that the regions are too big, either of which might make it hard to craft and implement plans particularly given competing interests within regions or entities spanning across regions. Literally hundreds of concepts for regional boundaries have been discussed by NMISC staff and participants in Open Houses over the past few years ranging from the proposal to use Council of Government boundaries (a favorite of NMISC staff that proved very unpopular based on input collected) to pure watershed boundaries that would align with hydrologically derived boundaries used for adjudications (not as popular in areas where surface water is not a viable water source) to highly local boundaries that would make regional planning more manageable but would create a complex landscape of competing regions for lawmakers to resolve.

The regional boundaries in the Proposed Rule are intended to strike a balance between planning around shared water sources, either surface or ground, and existing administrative boundaries, such as county lines, where appropriate. As described in Ms. Fox's testimony, the Proposed Rule includes some revisions based on input received on the Discussion Draft, but that input did not result in a change in the number of regions. To address concerns raised about the size of the regions, and based on multiple requests for sub-regions, the Proposed Rule provides for potential sub-regions within a planning region or across multiple planning regions. Sub-regions are an opportunity for a portion of a region to work with a regional council to establish a process for integrating their work before proceeding to work internally with greater focus on local issues. Sub-regions may

be able to get financial support in the form of grants and loans for planning activities to be outlined in the WSPA guidelines.

3. **Self-Convening Councils** – The concern raised is that the Proposed Rule does not sufficiently support self-convening Councils and provide immediate funding to aid them in initiating planning to meet the urgent needs across New Mexico. The Proposed Rule does provide for Councils to self-convene provided that NMISC Staff verify that the appropriate representatives have been invited to participate. The State's role in that confirmation is intended to ensure representation and therefore enable an effective planning process and community buy-in. Once the WSPA Rule is adopted, NMISC Staff will revisit the Discussion Draft guidelines, which, in accordance with the Act, will outline a funding program to support Councils with planning activities. The ultimate goal is for Regional Councils to be as autonomous and self-sustaining as possible. The State's role will be to ensure the Councils have access to the best available science, strategies for convening people, tools for navigating implementation challenges, and ongoing support for the planning work that is responsive to the needs of the Councils. One of the primary reasons for state-supported, locally driven water planning is to mitigate the risk of New Mexicans working against each other and resolving the conflicts slowly through legal proceedings (if you think planning is slow, try litigation). The State's engagement can ensure that planning does not occur in a piecemeal fashion, lacking consistent scientific guidance or in a manner that undermines statewide objectives. That said, NMISC Staff see the urgent need for planning and for standing up a funding program to support planning activities through the WSPA guidelines. NMISC-convened councils will get rolling as soon as feasible.

F. Opportunity to Plan Comprehensively and Collaboratively

Let's seize upon this incredible moment in time and the opportunity presented by WSPA to support New Mexican's in developing and implementing effective solutions to the challenges of increasing water scarcity. Investing in reimagined regional water planning will ensure greater water security for all New Mexicans now and in the future. It is imperative that the Commission engage and help shape this Rule, informed by the input received in this rulemaking process. The Proposed Rule outlines a process that is flexible enough to allow regional councils to tailor their planning to their specific regions, while having the NMISC provide support for the Councils in the form of Tools and Templates. This supportive role is intended to make sure that councils have the data and resources they need to succeed, that PPPs are moving forward, and work is ongoing with Councils to develop future Tools and Templates that serve the Councils' needs.

NMISC's work to implement WSPA and engage as many New Mexicans as possible in solving our water challenges includes effort in three principal tracks:

- 1) **Crafting and Implementing Re-envisioned Regional Water Planning in New Mexico** – This includes finalizing both a rule and guidelines called for by the Act. Both will play a critical role in shaping the process ahead. As you are considering the Proposed Rule, keep in mind that the guidelines are yet to be finalized and will include at a minimum:

- Opportunities for Stakeholder Collaboration
- Funding for Planning Activities
- Process for State Agency Collaboration
- Metrics for Reporting on Regional Water Projects, Programs, and Policies and Water Security Plan Implementation
- Procedures to Support the Implementation of a Regional Water Security Plan Schedule for Implementation of Regional Water

Once the Rule and guidelines are in place, the NMISC Staff plan to assemble an advisory roundtable to be made up of willing water leaders from around the State. This group will support and help inform the NMISC as we convene the Councils, refine Tools and Templates, and ensure that Councils have access to the best available science, data and models. We expect to assemble this group throughout the IPP.

- 2) Development of Tools and Templates to Support Water Planning – As described in more detail in Mr. Erdmann’s testimony, the NMISC staff and contractors are hard at work developing the resources to support Councils. The goal is to provide information, data, and resources to Councils as they initiate regional planning and as their needs evolve through continuing planning. So far, these Tools and Templates include:

- a. **Organizational Template Library** – Intended to support Regional Councils in developing by-laws or other governance documents, including providing for potential steering committees or workgroups, to ensure an effective planning process.
- b. **Water Planning Mapping Dashboard** – A one-stop-shop for baseline hydrological and demographic data statewide. Story maps highlight water planning efforts and publications, water use by categories, and available data. Efforts to update and expand are ongoing in conformance with the 2019 Water Data Act and in coordination with the NMOSE’s Water Conservation Office.
- c. **Small Public Water Systems Decision Support Tool** – To help support communities in identifying priority projects to increase water system resilience and identify potential local capacity obstacles.
- d. **Atlas of Plans** – A georeferenced tool to summarize existing relevant planning work for Councils to incorporate or build on by using geographic queries to easily access the hard work, good planning, and innovative ideas from previous and parallel planning efforts in their region.
- e. **Groundwater Fact Sheets** – Longer and shorter form information developed with New Mexico Tech to address the geology, water quantity and quality, uses, trends, and very importantly, data gaps related to groundwater in each area of the state.
- f. **2-D Aquifer Mapping** – New Mexico’s first map defining and delineating the major and minor aquifers of the state, developed with NM Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources.

- 3) Increasing Statewide Education and Engagement on Water – We need as many people as possible engaged and informed on New Mexico water issues. As Councils are convened by the NMISC or self-convene over the next few years, the NMISC will continue in parallel to actively engage New Mexicans of all ages on water issues. We plan to build on the success of the Main Stream campaign to continue that education and engagement statewide.
- 4) The NMISC and the NMOSE are leading state agency efforts to implement Action A1 in the 50-Year Water Action Plan related to water education. Action A1 includes implementation of the WSPA. In addition, the work to implement A1 will include:
 - a. Basic water education for all New Mexicans – including engagement such as the series of short videos on basic water concepts on mainstreamnm.org that provide essential information in an easy-to-understand format,
 - b. K-12 water education – including identifying, bolstering and increasing distribution of existing curriculum in collaboration with the Public Education Department and other academic institutions,
 - c. Water workforce development – in conjunction with UNM and other New Mexico academic institutions.

The successful NMISC Main Stream campaign has been integral to the success of WSPA implementation so far and continues to adapt and expand. The resources developed to date include a series of blogs highlighting water practices and humanizing water users statewide, educational videos, and a resource center that is home to technical and planning documents, including the work to date for WSPA implementation. New Mexico has a unique opportunity to re-imagine water planning for the State. Many of our neighboring states have incredibly successful programs that support locally driven solutions through efficient implementation. I think New Mexico can achieve similar results and that we can start quickly learning from our own communities and examples in our peer states.

We have unprecedented momentum, and significant support from executive and legislative leadership. New Mexico must respond to and prepare for the impacts of ongoing aridification, including the expectation of 25% less water over the next 50 years. Over 1,200 people have already participated in WSPA by providing the input that is the foundation for the Proposed Rule. We will continue working to reach all New Mexicans so that we can expand involvement in Regional Water Security Planning. It's time to plan comprehensively and collaboratively to ensure sound management of our water resources.

G. Suggested changes to the Proposed Rule Based on Comments Received

NMISC Staff reviewed the public comments that were posted on the public comment portal of the ISC Rulemaking and Public Comment page from July 17 to September 27. We received 75 public comments in total with 30 being submitted in the final weekend when the public comment portal was open. Based on our review and reflection, we do have a few further edits to make to the Proposed Rule that support the reasoning and basis for its adoption. Please note, the volume of suggestions submitted was significant and NMISC staff and leadership will continue to evaluate

those comments. There may be additional suggested edits by the time of the hearing based on input received during the comment period.

The following suggested edits are presented in order of the Proposed Rule. Suggested edits are shown in underlined italics or ~~strikeouts~~. The following sub-bullet provides a brief explanation of why these edits are being suggested and from whom we received the suggestion.

- Definitions:
 - 19.25.16.7 *(J) Regional Water Utility Authority – A regional water utility authority established by the Regional Water System Resiliency Act or the predecessor of that Act.*
 - This definition was added to ensure Regional Water Utility Authorities representation on the Councils. More explanation to this addition is below.
- Regions:
 - 19.25.16.9.B *(6) whether the proposed subregion would enable more effective input into the regional water security program of tribal water concerns and the needs of tribal communities.*
 - The addition of this criterion for evaluation by the Commission in determining a sub-region was suggested by the Pueblo of Laguna. NMISC Staff agree with this inclusion as one of the anticipated applications of the sub-region process is to enable communities who are part of an IWRS to plan together.
- Initial Planning Period:
 - 19.25.16.10.A (4) providing administrative support and facilitation for at least four meetings of each council within the region per calendar year.
 - Various commenters suggested a clarification of the meetings to be held by each region. NMISC Staff recommend adding the above edit to clarify that these required meeting would be held within the region.
 - 19.25.16.10.B (3) (e) the decision-making process to be used by the council to make planning recommendations and ultimately prioritize projects, programs, and policies.
 - A version of the above edit was suggested by NM Wild, Western Resource Advocates, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, American Rivers Action Fund, Audubon Southwest and Amigos Bravos. The suggested language above reflects the need for Councils operating principals to reflect all types of planning recommendations, not just the process for prioritizing PPPs.
- Composition:
 - 19.25.16.12.A (1) Representative members. Each governmental entity listed below, if present within the region, is entitled to have a representative to serve on the council for any planning region within which it is located. A single representative may represent multiple governmental entities. If a governmental entity is located in multiple regional water security planning regions, the governing body may appoint the same or different representatives to each council. Each representative member shall be appointed by resolution or official action of each governmental entity's governing body. Representative members will consist of the following:

- The above edit was suggested by New Mexico Acequia Association, New Mexico Acequia Commission, New Mexico Land Grant Council and RCAC. The addition of the language above makes the process inclusive of processes that NMAC and NMLGC can take.
 - 19.25.16.12.A (1)(e) one representative member identified by the governing body of each irrigation district, artesian conservancy district and conservancy district;
 - The above edit was suggested by the Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District. The edit makes the clearer that this governing entity falls into this category of representative members.
 - 19.25.16.12.A (1) (h) one representative member identified by the governing body of any Regional Water Utility Authority.
 - Four groups – ABCWUA, Eastern NM Water Authority, City of Clovis and RCAC – identified the need to add Regional Water Authorities as a representative member to the Councils they are located within. NMISC Staff agreed with this addition and agreed with RCAC’s addition that any group who formed a Regional Water Utility Authority via the Regional Water System Resiliency Act should also be able to be a representative member of any Council.
 - 19.25.16.12.A (2) (d) environmental, conservation, or ecosystem interests located ~~water advocacy non-governmental organizations with members or local chapters in~~ the region;
 - A version of the above edit was suggested by NM Wild, Western Resource Advocates, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, American Rivers Action Fund, Audubon Southwest and Amigos Bravos. This edit now better reflects the groups located within the region.
 - 19.25.16.12.A (2) (e) water-based sporting or recreational interests located in the region (fishing, rafting, etc.);
 - The above edit was suggested by NM Wild, Western Resource Advocates, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, American Rivers Action Fund, Audubon Southwest and Amigos Bravos. This edit ensures clarity by adding the word sporting which further clarifies the intention of this at-large member.
- Considerations:
 - 19.25.16.14.B (4) water needs for healthy upland, wetland, and riparian habitat.
 - Many commenters, including Rio Grande Return, Valencia Soil & Water Conservation District, and Trout Unlimited, noticed the lack of the term wetland in the inclusion at various points throughout the rule. Wetland was added here to the considerations section to reflect their importance. Wetland were also added as a PPP type in Section 15.
 - 19.25.16.14.C (3) compliance with and implementation of water rights settlements, including local and federally executed Indian water rights settlements;
 - The addition of the above language was submitted by WSTAC and supported by numerous tribal governments.

- Criteria:
 - 19.25.16.15.A (1) Water Security Tribal Advisory Council (WSTAC) engagement, involvement, information, and recommendations including WSTAC responses to those comments, and documentation of any unresolved -opposition;
 - The addition of the above language was submitted by WSTAC and supported by numerous tribal governments.
 - 19.25.16.15.A (5) comments received from state,~~and~~ federal, tribal and local governments agencies;
 - This edit stems from the WSTAC comment related to the role of WSTAC as a collective in contrast to the representational members of tribal governments as sovereign governments. With this edit and the one above the Proposed Rule now provides for Plan documentation of WSTAC responses, whatever they be, and federal, tribal, and local government responses.
 - 19.25.16.15.C (4) PPP types
 - 19.25.16.15.C (4)(k) aquifer recharge and groundwater sustainability
 - 19.25.16.15.C (4)(l) agricultural water use resilience
 - 19.25.16.15.C (4)(n) river, wetland and riparian habitat restoration and connectivity
 - 19.25.16.15.C (4)(o) livestock water management
 - 19.25.16.15.C (4)(s) scientific water studies
 - 19.25.16.15.C (4)(t) water related natural or green infrastructure

These six PPP types were recommended to augment existing PPPs by NM Wild, Western Resource Advocates, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, American Rivers Action Fund, Audubon Southwest and Amigos Bravos. These are recommended by NMISC Staff to be added as the list set forth in the section is a “not limited to list” and the intent of NMISC Staff is for PPP types to be added over time as new types of PPP get invented or become feasible.

H. Conclusion

Based on my professional education and extensive experience in these issues, my tenure at the NMISC, and my participation in the passage of the WSPA, and development of the Proposed Rule, I recommend the Commission adopt the Proposed Rule as filed with the Commission on July 17, 2025, with the changes recommended above.