

**La Asociación de las Acéquias del Río Vallecitos, Tusas y Ojo Caliente  
PO Box 335  
Ojo Caliente, NM 87549**

July 2, 2024

Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources  
Honorable Cliff Bentz, Chairman, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries, Committee  
on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Request for hearing on H.R. 8685 Ohkay Owingeh Rio Chama Water Rights Settlement Act  
of 2024

Dear Chairmen Westerman and Bentz,

I am writing on behalf of La Asociación de las Acéquias del Río Vallecitos, Tusas y Ojo Caliente to convey our support for the Rio Chama water rights settlement and to request a hearing on this critical legislation.

Our regional acequia association represents approximately 32 community acequias and hundreds of *parciantes* (water-rights users) in our region who irrigate almost 2,500 acres collectively. The proposed settlement will safeguard our water rights and traditional practices.

Approval of this settlement will mark a significant milestone for northern New Mexico. The settlement promises not only enhanced water security and the preservation of our historic lifestyle and cultural traditions but also substantial economic benefits throughout the region, spurring business activity and creating job opportunities.

This settlement is a well-designed, inclusive, and thorough resolution. The residents of Ojo Caliente and surrounding communities are supportive of this agreement. We at La Asociación de las Acéquias del Río Vallecitos, Tusas y Ojo Caliente earnestly urge you to assist in enacting this bill into law.

Sincerely,



Luis J. Peña  
Vice-President