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September 21, 2023

Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández (NM-03)
1510 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
<https://fernandez.house.gov/>

RE: Support for H.R. 1304/S. 595, the Rio San José and Rio Jemez Water Settlements Act of 2023

Dear Congresswoman Leger Fernández:

The Village of Milan, New Mexico, thanks you for sponsoring H.R. 1304, *The Rio San José and Rio Jemez Water Settlements Act of 2023*, and for your continued support of this critically important legislation. This Bill gives Congressional approval of the Settlement Agreement for determination of the water rights of the Pueblos of Acoma and Laguna and includes many benefits for the Village and its residents. This settlement was reached after many years of litigation and intense settlement negotiation between the Pueblos and the other major water rights claimants in the Rio San Jose Basin in New Mexico, including Milan.

The Board of Trustees of the Village of Milan unanimously approved the Settlement Agreement on May 11, 2022, because it protects and benefits the Village in several ways. First, under the settlement the Pueblos have agreed to give up their right to request a priority call against Milan and other junior non-Pueblo water rights holders. Second, the settlement provides protections for the Village's municipal water supply from impairment caused by the Pueblos' future development of their water rights. Third, the State adjudication court will retain jurisdiction to enforce and interpret the Settlement Agreement and hear appeals from Pueblo administrative decisions concerning their water rights. Fourth, the settlement provides for up to \$11 million in State funding to the Village for much needed water and wastewater infrastructure repairs and improvements. A secure municipal water supply and functioning infrastructure are critical to the welfare of our residents and the Village's ongoing efforts at economic development.


We understand that another Indian water rights settlement, *The Fort Belknap Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 2023*, recently received Senate approval by attaching it to the National Defense Authorization Act bills voted on by the Senate. We hope that you will support attaching H.R. 1304 to the NDAA or other legislation coming up for a vote should such an opportunity arise.

We thank you for representing the Village's interests and your continuing efforts to enact this legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact us through our legal counsel copied in this letter should you wish to discuss this matter with us.


Respectfully submitted,

Village of Milan Board of Trustees


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James Mercer, Trustee


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