

RIO DE CHAMA ACÉQUIA ASSOCIATION

June 29, 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:

The purpose of this letter is to express our complete support for the Rio Chama water rights settlement, and we respectfully request a hearing on this important legislation. The Rio Chama Acequia Association (“RCAA”) is made up of 21 acequias serving more than six hundred families and 5,000 irrigated acres located within the mainstream section of the Rio Chama, with flows originating from the base of Abiquiu Dam and joined by flows from Abiquiu Creek, El Rito Creek, Rio del Oso, and Rio Ojo Caliente. Our member water users will have their water rights and traditional uses protected by the settlement, if enacted.

If this settlement is approved, it will be a monumental achievement for our part of Northern New Mexico. The settlement is comprehensive and resolves major issues on the river, including greater reliability of supply and greater certainty of water use, and the funding from such settlement will provide for employment opportunities and other direct economic benefits to the parties and to the businesses and companies in the State of New Mexico. The settlement will provide jobs on the Pueblo and well as in the neighboring communities bringing in desperately needed revenues to improve the lives of the people within the Rio Chama Basin. Federal approval of the settlement will result in a win-win situation for all the parties. This is an inclusive and comprehensive settlement, and the residents of the Rio Chama Valley are greatly encouraged and very supportive of this settlement. The RCAA respectfully urges you to hold a hearing and help us get this bill enacted into law.

Sincerely,



Darel Madrid, President
Rio de Chama Acéquia Association

Cc: Honorable Raul M. Grijalva
Honorable Jared Huffman