

# Make your Voice Heard for a Secure Water & Climate Future at the 2014 New Mexico Legislature

*Before* the January 30<sup>th</sup>, the day of the event, please do TWO important things.

# 1 ~ **Write** a letter to your legislators about an issue you care about. Take these steps:

- A. **Find** your Senate and House representatives and write down how to reach them by phone, email and their office locations. All you need is your mailing address and enter it on this webpage: [http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/legislator\\_lookup.aspx](http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/legislator_lookup.aspx).

Senator's name, phone & office location: \_\_\_\_\_

House Representative name & office number: \_\_\_\_\_

- B. **Research** bills that you are interested in and the bills sponsored by your representatives. [To find bills by key word click here](#) or by legislator go to [http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/billfinder/bill\\_finder.aspx](http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/billfinder/bill_finder.aspx)
- C. **Write** a letter to your representatives on a water or climate issue or any other issue you care about. The letter can ask them to support or oppose a bill that has been introduced or provide information about the issues you care about. See the next page for an example of a letter to a legislator.

#2 ~ **Prepare 1 or 2 questions for the panel of water and climate experts** for the morning session from 9:30am to 11:30am. You are who gets to drive the discussion by the panel members so it only works if you bring questions. Please consider important questions and write them down, and bring them to the State Land Office where we meet at 9:30am.

**Write down two questions for the climate and water experts here:**

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I suggest teachers contact the representatives or their staff personally to let them know that you are coming on January 30 and that you'd like to meet with them. We will be finishing up the panel discussion at 11:30am so you could ask to meet with them then or in the afternoon of January 30.

**Please remember to email me a copy of your letter to [rich@riversource.net](mailto:rich@riversource.net). This helps me continue to secure funding for this project!**

## Ideas and examples for writing your letter to your legislator!

This year the legislature meets for 1 month with the final day of the session ending on February 20. Many bills in the legislature will have direct impacts on how water, air and land is protected in your community where your school is located. Your voice can make a difference but will only happen if you take the time to contact your legislators!

Please remember that bills have to be heard and approved in various committees to move forward towards becoming a law. A bill can also be rejected or get tabled (often the same as rejection). Once you find a bill you're interested in, find out what committees it has been assigned to and where it will be heard next. You can write a letter to a member of the committee or to the chair of the committee if your legislator isn't on the committee. Always make sure your legislator gets a copy of the letter you send to a committee member because your legislator may vote on it eventually.

**Sample letter to your legislator.** The following letter provides guidance for you to write something in your own words and give to your legislator.

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Date

The Honorable (name of your state senator or state representative)  
Legislator's address

Dear (title and name, i.e., Senator Montoya):

I write you to ask for your support of water harvesting from roofs of buildings by voting for Senate Bill 16 (*an example of an issue you might care about*). Increasing water harvesting improves the ability of people to withstand the impacts of drought, improve self-reliance of people to provide water for themselves and help prevent stormwater from causing pollution and erosion. For these reasons I ask you to support (write the number and name of the bill, such as SB16 Water Harvesting Income Tax Credit)

*Next paragraph: Describe why you think these issues are important based on your school, family, work or other experience. For instance. My experience studying stormwater is that much water is wasted when runoff from buildings comes off parking lots and roofs and enters a river carrying soil and other pollutants it picks up. Capturing water off roofs for use in landscaping saves valuable drinking water from being used and turns stormwater into an opportunity rather than a problem. Providing a tax credit for water harvesting will encourage more people to do it and thus create more abundant water supply for New Mexicans.*

Thanks for your attention to my request.

Sincerely,  
(your signature)

(Type your name and your address)

*You can also use this format to ask your representative to oppose a bill or simply pay attention to any issue you care about even if it is not about any particular legislation.*

## Here is an example of a letter written by a student from East Mountain High School

December 5, 2006

Representative Rhonda S. King  
New Mexico Legislature, Room 120  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Regarding: SJM18

Dear Representative King:

I am writing you to ask you to support Senate Joint Memorial 18 being heard by the Senate and Natural Resources Committee. This bill addresses public education and requests that all schools add to their curriculum the importance of acequias to the history and culture of New Mexico.

Acequias have been used in New Mexico by the Indians and Spanish for centuries and they play an important role in centuries-old community customs and traditions. Many of the people who live near acequias and use them have passed on traditions and knowledge from generation to generation, and the acequia communities would like to continue the traditions started long ago by their ancestors.

A perfect way to do this would be to teach about acequias in schools as part of the curriculum. Many children are unaware of even what acequias are and more importantly what they do for people who live near them. If children could be taught about acequias they could be taught about how the people a long time ago lived and governed over each other. It would also help to teach people the importance of water in communities and how we need to conserve and save it

East Mountain High School in a lot of ways is already ahead of the game you might say. The environmental science class has done experiments and has studied the history and culture of the San Antonio de Padua Acequia. In doing this, we have developed a sense of place for the acequia and how important it is to the people living near it. I also think that it would be a good thing if other children were educated on the acequias and how important they are to people.

In conclusion I think that SJM18 is a very good thing. It will help in many ways to greater educate the next generation. I think that you should vote yes for this bill when you are asked t vote for it. Thank you very much for reading this and I hope you will greatly consider this bill when the time comes

Sincerely,

Jessica Lucero  
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