MEMORANDUM

TO: **City of Santa Fe Public Utilities Committee**
City of Santa Fe Water Conservation Committee
BDD Board

FROM: **Rick Carpenter, Water Resources and Conservation Manager** RC

VIA: **Brian Snyder, Public Utilities Department and Water Division Director** BKS

DATE: **February 25, 2013**

SUBJECT: Update on Drought, Monsoon, and Water Resource Management

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CURRENT PUC UPDATE

As the Committee is aware, our region is still suffering through a severe drought. Our region has gone through two consecutive years of record drought and heat. The possible prospects of a third consecutive year of severe drought and heat would present significant challenges to all water purveyors and irrigators, and the City's Water Division takes this situation very seriously.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently updated its monthly report on its El Nino/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Diagnostic. This report indicates that current model predictions more strongly favor El Nino conditions to be neutral to weak (dry) through the Spring of 2013. Above average temperatures are also expected.

However, the City of Santa Fe has invested in a robust and diverse portfolio of four distinct water supply sources: Buckman well field, City well field, Canyon Road Water Treatment Plant on the Upper Santa Fe River, and the Buckman Direct Diversion on the Rio Grande. The City also has several years-worth of San Juan-Chama Project water stored in reservoirs, in case deliveries from the federal Bureau of Reclamation of San Juan-Chama Project water are curtailed. The City has also been "resting" the Buckman well field since early 2010. Therefore, City decision-makers and resource managers have a variety of policy options available in order to meet water supply demands during times of drought.

Current Local Conditions

	Reservoir Level	Santa Fe Snow Gage	Reservoir Inflow
February 25, 2013	30.4%	44 inches	0.45 MGD
5-Year Average This Date (2008 – 2012)	52.74%	39 inches	1.94 MGD

Rio Grande Basin

Surface flows in the Rio Grande and its tributaries have been well below normal, storage levels in regional reservoirs are very low currently, and the federal BoR recently stated that if there is no "meaningful moisture" received this winter/spring then this would mark the lowest water levels ever in New Mexico reservoirs prior to entering into a new irrigation season. With large moisture deficits deeply entrenched across the region, and with only one month of the wet season included in this forecast period, meaningful improvement seems unlikely.

San Juan Basin

According to the NRCS' Feb 1, 2013 Basin Outlook Report, "streamflow forecasts for the San Juan River Basin range from 78 percent of the 30 year avg. (1981-2010) for the Rio Blanco at the Blanco Diversion to 71 percent of 30 year avg. (1981-2010) for the Navajo Reservoir Inflow." Year-to-date precipitation is still well below normal though, at 75 percent, down from last year's 94 percent. The San Juan-Chama Project delivery forecast is expected to be updated by the BoR in mid-March. It is expected that deliveries for this year will be near normal to slightly below normal, however, since regional reservoir storage is so far below normal, conditions could significantly worsen for San Juan Chama Project deliveries next year.

PAST PUC UPDATES

For the past 16 months, the Water Division has provided the PUC a monthly memo as part of the consent agenda. These memos, collectively and individually, provide a comprehensive background of the status of drought, winter precipitation, and summer monsoonal precipitation. Committee members are encouraged to reference these past memos for context related to current monthly updates.