



Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Bill Highlights

The Fiscal Year 2024 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill provides \$41.2 billion in total funding. Heinrich successfully secured language in the bill to reclaim abandoned hardrock mines, support rural and small communities with repairing water and wastewater systems, and support National Conservation Lands.

Abandoned Mine Reclamation: Senator Heinrich secured continued funding for the Abandoned Hardrock Mine Reclamation Program after championing the creation of the program in the Infrastructure Law. Hardrock mines and mining features are related to the extraction of metals like copper, gold, silver, and uranium. When not reclaimed, many hardrock mines pose a hazard to public health and the environment. This funding will be used to clean up federal, state, Tribal, or private land and water resources affected by abandoned hardrock mines.

Small and Rural Water Systems: Senator Heinrich protected funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide technical assistance to rural and small community water and wastewater systems.

National Conservation Lands: Senator Heinrich protected funding to support National Conservation Lands, including Monuments, Scenic and Historic Trails, and Conservation Areas through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The funds will help the BLM meet national conservation goals, sustain increased visitation, enhance visitor experience, and administer the system's expansion. Senator Heinrich also successfully included language prioritizing land-use planning for the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument.

The bill also includes significant funding for 12 local projects across New Mexico. Heinrich fought to secure this funding, which will help repair drinking water and sewer infrastructure, protect wildlife habitat and cultural resources on the Caja del Rio plateau, improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk, and more.

Heinrich successfully secured funding for the following local projects in the bill:

- **\$1,450,000 for the Village of Questa to plan, design, and construct a drinking water storage tank.**
- **\$1,200,000 for the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority to construct a comprehensive sewer collection system in**

Carnuel to reduce community reliance on failing septic systems and improve groundwater quality.

- **\$1,000,000 for the City of Gallup to replace critically aged cast iron waterlines that have joints containing lead, improving drinking water quality, efficiency, capacity, and sustainability.**
- **\$850,000 for the Rio Lucio Mutual Domestic Water Consumer Association to replace old and undersized water lines and install new meters, which will reduce water line leaks and associated outages.**
- **\$430,000 for the City of Portales to complete planning and design for needed sewer line and manhole upgrades.**
- **\$400,000 for the Pueblo of Santa Clara to upgrade the air relief valves within the community's water system, improving system performance.**
- **\$150,000 for the Bureau of Land Management to purchase and place remote observation equipment to protect the wildlife habitat and cultural resources of the Caja del Rio Plateau in consultation with tribal governments.**

Additionally, Heinrich and Luján successfully included funding in the bill for the following five projects:

- **\$1,200,000 for New Mexico State University to acquire equipment and conduct research to improve the viability of seeds and seedlings used for reforestation in a post-wildfire environment.**
- **\$1,200,000 for the New Mexico State Forestry Division to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk in the Rio Chama Watershed.**
- **\$600,000 for the Village of Chama to replace aging water and sewer distribution lines, which will resolve significant ongoing issues caused by pipe leaks, improve water pressure, and remove health risks from water line contamination.**

• Heinrich, Luján, and U.S. Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.) secured:

- **\$959,752 for the Pueblo of Tesuque to plan for the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant.**

• Heinrich, Luján, and U.S. Representative Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.) secured:

- **\$959,752 for City of Carlsbad to replace the Double Eagle Water Line to improve water pressure and eliminate wasted water and health risks from water line leaks and breaks.**