

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 14, 2024

Hon. Deb Haaland
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Hon. Merrick Garland
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Secretary Haaland and Attorney General Garland:

We write to urge that the Department of the Interior (DOI) Department of Justice (DOJ), quickly resolve the *Texas v. New Mexico and Colorado* litigation in collaboration with the parties. The Rio Grande is of regional, national, and international importance. The river and its tributaries provide drinking water for approximately 13 million people in the United States and Mexico. The Rio Grande Basin is also critical to agriculture, industry, and the environment, providing irrigation water for an estimated 1.8 million acres of crop and pasture land, supporting a growing outdoor recreation economy, and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. Communities in the Basin are constantly grappling with the unpredictability of water supplies due to long-term aridification. A speedy resolution will allow for all parties to move forward and pursue water use practices that best serve their people.

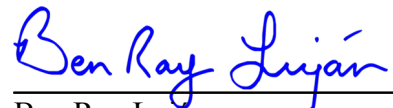
Predictable access to water in New Mexico is necessary for communities, agriculture, and businesses. New Mexico has the lowest water-to-land ratio of all 50 states. As of November 7, 2024, a majority of the state of New Mexico is experiencing some degree of abnormal dryness or drought. Over the last year, nearly every part of the state has experienced a period of drought. That means that more than 2.1 million New Mexicans and almost 44,000 businesses have had inconsistent or extremely limited access to water in the last year. In times of worsening drought and precipitation out of line with historical patterns, it is imperative that our communities, municipalities, farmers, ranchers, and businesses have as much clarity about their future water supplies as possible. A delayed resolution to the issues posed in the Supreme Court's decision in *Texas v. New Mexico and Colorado* imperils the ability of water users to prepare for more common and more extreme droughts in the Rio Grande Basin.

We urge you to resolve this long-standing litigation before the end of the year.

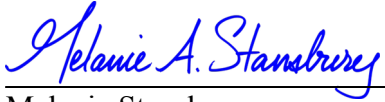
Sincerely,



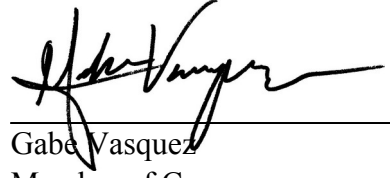
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



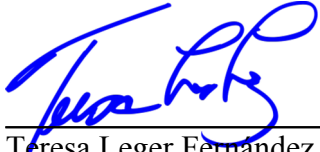
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress