

SENATOR TOM UDALL: WORKING FOR A SECURE WATER FUTURE

Tom Udall has achieved key wins to protect the water resources and rural economies of communities across New Mexico, the United States and Indian Country, in the face of rising droughts, water insecurity, and the accelerating threat of climate change.

Udall has advanced measures to conserve water, address drought, fight climate change, and protect New Mexico's farm and rural economies and traditional communities

As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Tom has secured major investments for water infrastructure and drought preparedness. Tom has led forward-looking legislation to find smart and efficient solutions to conserve water resources.



FIGHTING FOR WATER SECURITY

Tom knows that water is life, and with increasingly severe droughts, he's fought for common-sense progress to make the most of every drop of water. Tom has secured key wins to protect and conserve our water resources:

- Tom secured authorization of EPA's voluntary WaterSense program that labels water-efficient products and has saved 4.4 trillion gallons of water and more than \$87 billion in water and energy bills over time.
- Tom has helped secure hundreds of millions of dollars for water infrastructure and conservation projects across New Mexico including for the Upper, Middle and Lower Rio Grande; Rio Grande Pueblos; Carlsbad, Cochiti Lake, Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, Eastern New Mexico, Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority, and many more.
- Tom worked with a bipartisan group of Senators from the seven Colorado River Basin states and Indian Tribes to quickly pass legislation to implement the Colorado River Basin Drought Contingency Plan. The plan uses voluntary and innovative management strategies to avoid historic lows in Colorado River reservoirs, which would trigger dramatic water delivery cuts to water transferred to the Rio Grande basin in New Mexico.
- Tom introduced the Western Water Security Act of 2019, legislation to improve water management in the West through investments in water infrastructure, a focus on conservation, efficiency, and environmental restoration, and tailored funding for local communities.
- After convening a stakeholder process following a 2012 New Mexico water conference co-hosted with New Mexico State University, Tom developed the New Mexico Drought Preparedness Act to help New Mexico better prepare for a drier future and give the state more resources and flexibility to manage drought. Tom returned to the NMSU water meeting every four years to continue to generate new ideas and partnerships for water resource conservation and management. Core provisions of the 2012 bill were later enacted into law, including:
 - Authorization for the Middle Rio Grande peak flow restoration, and Environmental Restoration for the Española Valley and Rio Grande Tributaries.
 - Key provisions to continue supplementation projects from Cochiti Lake for an additional five years to provide greater operational flexibility for irrigation, municipal and industrial purposes, and support endangered species by providing the water and habitat they need to survive.
 - Reauthorization for and investment in local collaborative efforts to protect and restore watersheds and species through the Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act and the Rio Puerco Watershed Management Act Extension.
 - Restarted investment in the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program at \$150 million per year to support technical and financial help to support off-farm conservation projects.
 - Long-term authorization of the WaterSense program, which provides voluntary certification of high efficiency water appliances.

“Make no mistake about it: we are in the midst of a water crisis in the West. Communities in New Mexico and across the country depend on fragile water ecosystems that are struggling to adapt to the wild swings in weather caused by climate change. In New Mexico, we know how vital water is to preserving our economy, our environment, and our way of life. We need to address this challenge – so future generations can sustain life in the West.”

-U.S. Senator Tom Udall

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and the ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior and Environment, Tom has secured historic investments in drought prevention and water projects in New Mexico, Indian Country, and nationwide.

- Tom enacted legislation directing the National Academies of Science to conduct a comprehensive hydrologic study of the Rio Grande Basin to identify opportunities for water conservation, optimization of water storage for irrigators and cities, and ecosystem benefits. The study will also evaluate the impact of climate change on the basin and how different federal, state and local entities can work together to manage the system as a whole.
- Tom secured major increases in funding for the U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program, to significantly expand support for clean water projects to protect human health and the environment in colonias and disadvantaged border communities.
- Tom reinstated the Transboundary Aquifer Assessment program, keeping it funded at \$1 million annually providing new information for state and local officials to address shared water resource challenges in the U.S.-Mexico border region.
- Tom passed the Smart Energy and Water Efficiency Act in the Senate, to support smart water system pilot projects. Communities would compete for grant funding to develop demonstration projects and to create a "smart-grid" for water - detecting leaks as soon as they happen, or even before they happen - to save both water and the energy needed to transport and clean it.

FIGHTING FOR NEW MEXICO'S ACEQUIAS, LAND GRANTS, AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

Acequias and land grant-mercedes (land grants) are communities that are deeply important to the culture and history of New Mexico. Tom has fought for the future of these traditional communities, which trace their origin back centuries.

“New Mexico’s traditional communities— our acequias and land grants— are centuries-old institutions, conscientious and vigilant stewards of our land and water that are central to New Mexico’s culture, agriculture industry, and way of life.”

-U.S. Senator Tom Udall

Tom fought to make sure that, for the first time, acequias and land grants have direct access to U.S. Department of Agriculture funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program – to help them adopt sustainable practices – and that acequias have direct access to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program – to help them leave the land healthier.

NATIVE WATER RIGHTS

As vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Tom has promoted Tribal sovereignty and self-sufficiency by advancing legislation to authorize Indian water rights settlements and provide permanent, mandatory funding to fully implement them.

Tom understands that resolving long-standing legal claims through settlements avoids time consuming, expensive, and divisive litigation and enables all stakeholders to better plan for the future.

Notably, Tom played a key role in successfully authorizing all four Indian water rights settlements in New Mexico— Aamodt, Taos, Navajo-Gallup, and Jicarilla Apache Nation— which enabled these Tribal communities to develop the infrastructure necessary to utilize their quantified water rights and provided surrounding communities with certainty. In addition, Tom:

- Led a bipartisan Congressional coalition to advance the Indian Water Rights Settlement Extension Act out of the Senate to extend the Reclamation Water Settlement Fund for an additional \$1.2 billion; provide full-funding to implement the Aamodt settlement, and authorize the Navajo-Utah Water Rights Settlement to resolve water rights claims of the Navajo Nation on the San Juan River in the Upper Colorado River Basin in Utah.
- Enacted the Claims Resolution Act to resolve the Aamodt Water Rights litigation, the longest running Indian water rights dispute in the nation, by authorizing a regional water system to deliver 2,500 acre-feet per year of water to the Pueblos and up to 1,500 acre-feet per year to Santa Fe County. This Act also authorized the Abeyta Water Rights Settlement that provides \$124 million to resolve the Taos Pueblo's water rights claims in the Rio Pueblo de Taos and Rio Hondo stream systems, tributaries to the Rio Grande River.
- Enacted legislation to settle water rights on the San Juan River as part of the Public Land Management Act of 2009 by providing \$870 million to construct the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, which will provide water to a quarter of a million people in the Navajo Nation, the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the city of Gallup, New Mexico

Tom has increased funding for the Tribal Partnership Program, authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers to work collaboratively with Tribes to study the feasibility of water resource projects that will substantially benefit Tribal members.

Tom has worked through the Appropriations Committee to secure critical resources for Native water and ecosystems:

- Tom increased funding for the Tribal Partnership Program, authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers to work collaboratively with Tribes to study the feasibility of water resource projects that will substantially benefit Tribal members.
- Tom has championed the Indian Reservation Drinking Water Program, which authorizes grants to carry out a program consisting of 20 projects for Indian tribes on reservations in the Upper Missouri River Basin and Upper Rio Grande Basin to connect, repair, or expand existing drinking water services or improve water quality, pressure, or other water services.
- Tom secured critical funds for Española Valley Ecosystem Restoration, authorizing \$62 million in total funding for environmental restoration of 280 acres of bosque landscape along the Rio Grande on Santa Clara and Ohkay Owingeh lands.



GOLD KING MINE

The Gold King Mine spill was and remains a disastrous combination of federal mismanagement, lack of oversight and lack of accountability. The damage—spanning three states, hurting the Navajo Nation and farmers in northern New Mexico – has been devastating. Tom has fought to make these communities whole:

- He led the effort to authorize and secure millions of dollars for a long-term water monitoring plan for areas impacted by the Gold King Mine spill.
- Tom helped the Navajo Nation and other communities with reimbursements and introduced legislation to ensure the EPA continues to work with affected communities to compensate those who were impacted. The proposed legislation would also require the agency to identify the risks of future spills by assessing other abandoned mines for cleanup.
- Udall has also led the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act that would make mining companies pay their fair share to taxpayers for public land royalties and devote resources to cleaning up abandoned mines across the country like Gold King Mine.

