

Dear Senator George K. Muñoz,

- **District:** 4
- **County:** Cibola, McKinley & San Juan
- **Service:** Senator since 2009
- **Occupation:** Businessman
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I am Paul Spencer, President of the Bluewater Water and Sanitation District (BWSD) in Cibola County.

We sincerely thank you for your continued support of our small rural district over the years, including your sponsorship of capital outlay requests that have directly benefited our community. Most recently, thanks to the \$400,000 appropriation secured in 2024 and the additional \$400,000 in capital outlay for 2025—once released by the New Mexico Finance Authority—these funds are already earmarked to replace failing clay sewer pipes, rehabilitate manholes and lift stations, and upgrade water mains and hydrants across the district. Your advocacy has been instrumental in helping us move forward on these critical phases.

The funding we have received in FY2020 has already delivered measurable savings and broader community benefits. To date, it has helped us save tens of thousands of dollars in operational costs, and it will continue to save tens of thousands more into the future. Because of the allocations, we were able to purchase a much-needed vacuum trailer. This equipment has enabled us to maintain and service our wastewater distribution systems, manholes, and lift stations effectively and efficiently. It has also allowed us to meet EPA requirements for lead and copper inventory on time and under budget—avoiding potential penalties and ensuring public health compliance.

Beyond our own district, the vacuum trailer has supported neighboring community public water systems facing similar aging infrastructure challenges. Many rural systems in our region are approaching or exceeding their life expectancy, leading to frequent failures and increased risks. By allowing these neighbors to utilize our equipment, we have helped them maintain and manage their water and wastewater infrastructure without bearing the full cost of ownership themselves. This collaborative approach maximizes the impact of state dollars and strengthens regional resilience.

We stay current with all required audits, reporting, and compliance obligations, but more than that—we plan ahead. Infrastructure in BWSD, like in 86% of the nation's community public water systems, has been neglected for far too long. Until 2013, we received no major state support and handled everything in-house with limited resources. Now, thanks to supporters like you, we are breaking that cycle, one funded phase at a time.

For the 2026 legislative session, we respectfully request \$1.1 million in capital outlay: \$600,000 dedicated to drinking water upgrades and \$500,000 for sewer system repairs. This next block of funding would enable essential projects, including:

- A direct feed line to our storage tank for improved water quality and fire protection;
- More reliable system pressure and reduced leaks;
- Preparation for the replacement of our aging water storage tank to maintain compliance with state and federal regulations and extend its service life.

Our residential rates have remained frozen since 2014 and now exceed 5% of median household income—well beyond what the United Nations considers affordable for basic water access. We are committed to protecting our residents from further rate increases and will not impose additional burdens without first exhausting all available external resources, including capital outlay.

This funding does not eliminate our long-term needs, but it clears critical bottlenecks, completes key phases, keeps residents safe, and maintains reliable service—building toward the day when the district can shoulder more of the load independently.

We deeply appreciate your leadership on the Senate Finance Committee and your ongoing commitment to rural New Mexico communities facing infrastructure challenges. Thank you in advance for considering this request and for helping us continue this vital work.

Respectfully,
Paul Spencer
President
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