

## NM to meet with Pueblos in May on Rio Grande governance

### Pueblos say they're exploring tribal consultation process on Colorado River for NM model

By: [Danielle Prokop](#) - April 29, 2024 3:35 am



The Rio Grande flows near Albuquerque as the sun rises over the Sandia Mountains. (Photo by Diana Cervantes for Source NM)

The Rio Grande Compact Commission meeting on Friday had a small portion dedicated to describing future meetings with six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos to get tribal perspective on governing the state's largest river.

The three-member commission met for its annual meeting Friday, hearing from legal advisors and New Mexico State Engineer Mike Hamman on the proposal. The commission is made up of appointees from Colorado, Texas and New Mexico and a non-voting chair from the federal government.

A coalition of six Pueblos – Cochiti, Santo Domingo, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Sandia and Isleta – have approached the commission for the past two years. Through spokespeople, the coalition said they sought a “seat at the table” to address the exclusion of tribal governments from the commission itself and to have more representation beyond the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, who makes presentations at the meeting.

Legal and engineer advisors described “multiple multi-hour discussions” over a series of months but had not developed a protocol for Pueblos to make a presentation to the commission.

Hamman, during commissioner comments, expanded on that report, saying that other commission business, such as the lawsuit before the Supreme Court over Rio Grande water, caused competing priorities.

“The Rio Grande Compact Commission has been engaged on a number of really important issues that included *Texas v. New Mexico Original No. 141* case, and a number of other matters that did not allow us to fully formalize any kind of proposal in that regard.”

Hamman said he met with coalition leaders on April 4, securing an agreement to consult with all tribal governments on the Rio Grande governance in May, as part of his duties in the Office of the State Engineer. He said this was modeled after tribal consultation efforts on the Colorado River.

He said the goal would be a half-day meeting used to develop the process for regular meetings between tribal governments and the Rio Grande Compact Commission.

“We also acknowledge that six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos have probably the most direct impact on operational issues associated with the Rio Grande compact. But with that said, we have a responsibility to consult with all of the tribes and basin,” Hamman said.

U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Engineer Sarah Delavan ceded some of her presentation time to the coalition, inviting Glenn Tenorio, the former governor of Santa Ana Pueblo and vice chair of the coalition, to address the commission.

Tenorio acknowledged that other Pueblo leadership was in attendance and read from a prepared statement.

He said the coalition was looking to learn more about tribal consultation in the Colorado River negotiations and determine if a similar model can be used for the Rio Grande.

“The coalition looks forward to working with the Commission in the coming months to find the most appropriate means of future engagement,” he said.

[GET THE MORNING HEADLINES DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX](#)

SUBSCRIBE

Republish

Our stories may be republished online or in print under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. We ask that you edit only for style or to shorten, provide proper attribution and link to our website. AP and Getty images may not be republished. Please see our [republishing guidelines](#) for use of any other photos and graphics.