



Office of the Governor

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State providing hundreds of thousands of gallons of water to Chama amid ongoing water system leak; asks village to request official county emergency declaration to enable additional state support

SANTA FE – The state of New Mexico continues to coordinate water delivery to the Village of Chama as the community faces an ongoing water system issue. The state has also asked the municipal government to formally request an official state of emergency declaration via the Rio Arriba County Commission to enable the state to provide additional financial and administration resources to be made available to the community.

The state of New Mexico has been aiding the Village of Chama since June 10, 2022, when the state was first made aware of the need for drinking water due to an unaddressed leak in the Village's drinking water distribution system. While drinking water systems are the responsibility of local governments, the state immediately stepped in to lend assistance, with the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) coordinating the delivery of both potable water for the public and water to be deposited into the Village's water system. DHSEM coordinated a water buffalo to be regularly delivered by the New Mexico Rural Water Association, as well as the delivery of bottled water. The Department has also been delivering 20,000 gallons of water a day that is supporting the Village's drinking water system.

The New Mexico Environment Department also immediately offered technical assistance to the Village and offered to connect the Chama water utility to contractors to assist with addressing its leaking distribution system. The state is offering every available support to identify and rectify the issue, but the ability to assist is hampered without the cooperation and leadership of local officials.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed into law \$800,000 in capital outlay funds in 2021 for the Village of Chama designated specifically for water system improvements and repairs which would have addressed these needs. Those funds have not yet been encumbered by the Village but are readily available, and the state urges the Village to apply them to remediating the ongoing situation.

The DHSEM Disaster Assistance Program requires a formal disaster escalation process via emergency management at the county level. A formal declaration of a state of emergency will make additional funding and state resources available to the community.

The state remains in frequent contact with Village of Chama officials and is working with them to address the situation while the state continues to deliver potable water to the community.

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