



October 3, 2012

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Estancia Basin,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Stephen Easley and I am a candidate for the New Mexico House of Representatives, District 50. This district encompasses a large portion of the Estancia Basin. You received this letter because you live in HD 50.

Clean air, land, and water are three of the greatest gifts given to us by generations of New Mexicans who came before us. It is both our obligation and our opportunity to care for these resources and use them wisely so that future generations will continue to prosper.

Because the Estancia Basin has no large river outlet and therefore catches and retains rainwater, there is an enormous amount of water in the Basin stored in underground aquifers. There is a relatively shallow aquifer that contains fresh, drinkable water. This aquifer currently supplies much of the domestic water for users in the Basin, as well as a great deal of water for agricultural use. Some authorities have said that this aquifer contains as much as 6 million acre-feet of water (an acre-foot of water is equal to 326,000 gallons of water – enough for three households for a year).

Much deeper, and evidently not connected in any way to the upper level aquifer, is a brackish (salty or mineralized) water aquifer. Expert estimates suggest that this aquifer may contain as much as 93 million acre-feet of water! This water is not directly drinkable or useful for agriculture. It would need to be treated in small, local, relatively inexpensive desalination plants before being made available to users in the Basin. Exactly such a desalination plant is currently in the works for Alamogordo, which sits in the Tularosa Basin and is very similar to the Estancia Basin in terms of water.

All of this water is a wonderful resource for residents of the Estancia Basin. We must use the water carefully, be as water-thrifty as we can, and make solid plans for future water usage. Some groups from the Basin, comprised of water experts and Basin stakeholders, have been making such plans for over a decade.

Many people have spoken to me of the need for economic development in Basin communities like Edgewood, Moriarty, Estancia, and Mountainair. One of the foremost requirements for economic development is the long-term, reliable availability of water. No companies will want to come here and bring jobs if they think we will run out of water. Fortunately, with good planning and investment, we will have plenty of water for agriculture, basin residents, and job growth opportunities.

A few years ago a handful of Basin residents wanted to participate in a plan to sell Basin water to Santa Fe. Quite rightly, citizens of the Basin rose up as one to stop that plan. I agree with the citizens of the Basin, and **I wish to go on record as opposing the transfer of Estancia Basin water resources to Santa Fe, Albuquerque, or anywhere else. This has always been my position. As your State Representative, I will work hard to ensure that your water resources remain with you.**

I look forward to earning your trust and your vote in November.

Sincerely,

Stephen Easley
Candidate, House District 50