



## EL PASO COUNTY WATER IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT No. 1

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**News Release – June 8, 2026**

### **El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1**

#### **This Morning's Supreme Court Order Concluding Years-Long Legal Disputes Over the Rio Grande**

The District is pleased to announce that, this morning, the Supreme Court of the United States ordered into effect a set of settlement agreements that end nearly two decades of hard-fought legal disputes over the Rio Grande. For the El Paso area, the most important among this set of agreements is one that will govern future operations of the already more-than-a-century old federal Reclamation project known as the Rio Grande Project that delivers a reliable and vital water supply to area farmers and the City of El Paso.

Today's Supreme Court order, combined with last week's entry of a settlement decree in the Rio Grande Compact litigation, moves the Rio Grande out of an era of litigation into one of a more cooperative and improved water administration. It puts into place a years-long effort by the District to ensure that the rules governing future Rio Grande operations in the El Paso area and southern New Mexico provide for the fair and equitable distribution and delivery of the river's water among farmers and municipalities.

*"Today's Supreme Court action further strengthens the independence of the federal Rio Grande Project and the critical protection that independence provides to a secure water supply for El Paso farmers and the City of El Paso,"* said Arthur Ivey, President of the District's Board of Directors. Ivey added that he was particularly grateful for the cooperation of the United States Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Justice Natural Resources Division, both of which worked closely with the District and its Rio Grande Project counterpart, Elephant Butte Irrigation District, in southern New Mexico to reach the agreements.

The agreements approved today increase the Rio Grande Project's viability by:

- Providing mechanisms for New Mexico to reduce groundwater pumping to protect Rio Grande flows downstream of Caballo Reservoir and assure the District receives the water to which its farmers are entitled;
- Continuing, in perpetuity, the crucial Operating Agreement that has been in place since 2008 as protection for the El Paso part of the Project; and
- Improving Project conveyance efficiency, conserving scarce water resources, and ensuring that the District's share of water from Project storage is available for delivery to the District's farmers and the City of El Paso.