

## **CRRUA Customer Message**

05-31-2024

### **CRRUA's Crosby Meets with U.S Rep. Vasquez** *Vasquez Pledges Continued Support for CRRUA*

U.S. Rep. Gabe Vasquez, (D) New Mexico, whose congressional district includes the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA) service area, travelled to Santa Teresa, NM today for a progress report by CRRUA.

The meeting was an opportunity for executive director Juan Crosby to brief Vasquez on CRRUA operations, crucial issues, and improved communications.

Crosby informed Vasquez that CRRUA's four arsenic treatment facilities are producing water below the federal limit for arsenic, which is 10 parts per billion (ppb.) CRRUA has passed the last five arsenic tests in a row including the most recent quarterly test conducted by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED.) CRRUA voluntarily conducts arsenic testing twice monthly as a self-governance practice and to help restore customer confidence.

Crosby also addressed discolored water. He said primary causes include hydrant flushes and periods of peak water use that disturb naturally occurring sediments in water lines and water storage tanks. Reports of discolored water by customers are down 75% from February to April 2024.

Vasquez said as a former Las Cruces City Councilor and member of the city's utilities board, he understands utilities-related issues and the resources needed to address them. Vasquez announced that he has requested \$2.5 million in federal funding for water well rehabilitation and pledged to continue supporting CRRUA by identifying additional sources of federal funding. CRRUA capital improvement projects include expanded water production, storage and distribution.

Crosby informed Vasquez that constraints facing CRRUA include limited revenues associated with the current rate structure. According to NMED data for water rates, CRRUA is 50% below the statewide average and rates do not provide for capital reinvestment of CRRUA's \$81 million infrastructure. A rate adjustment approved in 2019 by a previous board of directors will go into effect July 1, 2024. Residential water rates will go from \$15 to \$17.83 for the first 3,000 gallons. Residential wastewater rates will go from \$20.62 to \$27 minimum on the first 7,000 gallons.

Crosby also reported to Vasquez that CRRUA serves a population of 21,752 in 36 square miles and four separate service areas: Sunland Park, Santa Teresa, Santa Teresa Industrial Park, and Border Region with an arsenic treatment facility for each area.

Water is supplied by 14 wells and seven ground storage tanks through 120 miles of transmission/distribution lines.

Crosby said improved customer communication includes the timely posting of information on CRRUA's website, Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Also attending the meeting with Vasquez were members of the CRRUA board of directors, Sunland Park City Council, Dona Ana County Commission, NMED, and the Border Industrial Association.

Photo cutlines:

[Photo #1](#): CRRUA executive Director Juan Crosby (right) provides a utility update to U.S Rep. Gabe Vasquez in Santa Teresa, NM on May 31, 2024.

Photo #2: U.S. Rep. Gabe Vasquez (second from left) meets with CRRUA officials and other interested parties in Santa Teresa, NM on May 31, 2024.