

Good afternoon and welcome to presentation of “The Impact of Climate Change – What It Means to the Judiciary”.

I am Judge Mannie Arrieta from the Third Judicial District down in Las Cruces. I’ve been a Water Judge for the last 15 years, and additionally, in 2022, I was fortunate to become one of the first graduates of the Judicial Leaders in Climate Science program sponsored by the Environmental Law Institute and now with the National Judicial College.

With us today, we have a climate change scientist from the Los Alamos National Labs, and a hydrogeologist from the New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology in Socorro. Our hope for today is to educate you on the current status of climate change from a scientific, a hydrological and a legal perspective –with an ultimate focus on NM.

A couple of caveats before we start the presentation. First, please note that we are not trying to teach any judge on how to decide a climate change case – we are simply presenting you with information so that you can understand the nature of the problem before you. Secondly, we are not here to debate its existence or to determine what human contributions are involved in climate change.

When I first talked about climate change in 2022, I used to open by saying, “I’m not here to talk about Climate Change, Big C-Big C. You know, the political football that gets kicked around.” We’re here to talk about climate change, small c-small c. Those are the climate changes that we know and read about almost daily: hurricanes and floods in coastal regions, tornados and extreme storms in the Midwest, atmospheric rivers and extreme snow fall in the western coast, and of course extreme drought, or lack of water in the West.

With that, I would like to present our first speaker from the Los Alamos National Labs, a climate scientist who has done extensive work on the effect moisture, or lack of moisture on vegetation, Dr. Sanna Sevanto. Dr. Sevanto, the floor is yours....

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Thank you Dr. Sevanto. And now for our second speaker, we have Stacy Timmons, a staff researcher from the New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology. Stacy has done extensive work with NM aquifers and the Water Data Act. Stacy, the floor is yours ....