# Supreme Court ends water dispute

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Suwashing fon (AP) — The su-preme Court Monday closed out a 16-year-old dispute between New Mexico and Texas, approving New Mexico's agreement to pay Texas \$14 million for past violations of an agreement between the two states.

"We will deliver the money on March 1," New Mexico State Engineer Steve Reynolds said.

The justices unanimously cepted the payment suggested by special master Charles J. Meyers and previously agreed to by lawyers for

The high court in 1987 had ruled Texas was entitled to either money or extra water as compensation for New Mexico's past violations of the water-use agreement, the Pecos River Compact.

The dispute began in 1974, when Texas sought to sue New Mexico in the Supreme Court. A year later, the court agreed to hear the case even though it had not previously been aired in a lower court.

New Mexico's lawyers did not disagree that a 340,100 acre-feet water shortfall occurred in Texas from 1950 through 1983. But they initially objected to paying any com-pensation retroactively.

Meyers, appointed by the justices to supervise the lawsuit between the two states, originally recommended New Mexico pay back about 34,000 acre-feet of water a year for 10 years. An acre-foot is equal to the amount of water required to cover

an acre to the depth of one foot. In 1987 the court said Meyers should consider letting New Mexico pay monetary damages instead

Texas had sought up to \$900 million in damages. However, the two states last August agreed on the \$14

In a brief, unsigned ruling Mon-day, the court said New Mexico must pay Texas by March 1 in final set-

Water Assistance Fund of the state's Water Development Board.

That money is "to be used for agricultural and irrigation projects ... in the Texas counties of Loving, Ward, Reeves and Pecos," the court

shall give preference to projects and studies affecting surface water irri-gators in the Red Bluff Water Power Control District in the four designated Texas counties, if appropri-

The court said Texas' attorney tlement of the dispute.

Texas has agreed to deposit \$13.8 million of the money in the Texas studies," the ruling said, "the board studies," the ruling said, "the board studies," the ruling said.

The court said Texas attorney general could treat the remaining \$200,000 as fees incurred by his studies," the ruling said, "the board staff.

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