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Supreme Court gives feds go-ahead in Rio Grande case

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The United States Supreme Court delivered a ruling two weeks ago on March 5 in a multi-state case involving water rights on the Rio Grande.

In 1906, the United States made a treaty with Mexico to ensure a certain amount of the river's water made it past the border. But in the early 20th century, New Mexico, Colorado and Texas also made a deal among themselves to deliver a certain amount of water to each other. It's called the Rio Grande Compact.

Texas brought the suit, *Texas v. New Mexico et al.*, in 2013, claiming New Mexico breached the three-state compact by not delivering enough water in the Rio Grande to its southern neighbor.

The United States, acting with its federal authority, made a parallel case against New Mexico. Their case was partially based on the idea that whatever happens among the three states directly impacts the federal government's ability to deliver on the treaty with Mexico.

The Supreme Court's March 5 decision was penned by Neil Gorsuch, a Colorado native and President Donald Trump's appointee to the court. The ruling gives the United States the clearance to pursue claims under the Rio Grande Compact.

"It is clear enough that the federal government has an interest in seeing that water is deposited...consistent with the compact's terms," read the unanimous opinion of the court.

The case has been handed back to a special master who is overseeing the resolution of the water rights disputes.

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