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Environment Department Begins Water Line Replacement to Remove Petroleum Contamination in Peñasco

Work Will Provide Clean Water for 12 Residences

(Santa Fe) — The New Mexico Environment Department's Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau began a water line replacement this week that will provide cleaner drinking water for 12 families whose water was contaminated by petroleum. The drinking water was contaminated by leaking petroleum storage tanks from an old gas station.

The department is working with the contractor of the gas station owner to complete the work, which involves excavating 11,000 cubic yards of petroleum contaminated soil and replacing about 700 feet of a water supply line along a stretch of N.M. 75. Crews have excavated petroleum contaminated soil from an area that was 11-feet deep and 200-feet long. Work is expected to continue through September.

“This project is one of the more rewarding ones the Environment Department undertakes because we are able to see immediate improvement in the quality of life for residents of our state,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “Cleaner water will soon be flowing from residents’ taps.”

Members of the 12 families noticed their water smelled and tasted of petroleum. The source of the contamination was from leaking petroleum storage tanks from A-1 Auto gas station in Peñasco. The New Mexico Environment Department and the gas station in Peñasco began the project after local residents reported the contamination.

About \$3 million from the New Mexico Corrective Action Fund will pay for the project.

NMED's Petroleum Storage Tank and Drinking Water bureaus took water line and tap water samples from the 12 homes in January. NMED provided temporary tap filters to those residents that month.

NMED authorized an investigation near A-1 Auto in February to determine impacts from the contamination to the community water line. Results of soil and soil vapor sampling showed significant impacts to the subsurface soils near A-1 Auto and along the southeast to northwest alignment of N.M. 75 below A-1 Auto. Although the initial analyses of tap water samples taken from homes along the water line detected low levels of petroleum contamination, the water met State drinking water standards. Additional periodic tap sampling will be performed after the installation of the new water line to ensure the drinking water is safe and clean. The PSTB will continue to monitor the local groundwater conditions after the project is complete.

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