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December 22, 2010
For Immediate Release

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Environment Secretary Ron Curry Denies Discharge Permit for Ruch Dairy in Hobbs
Gov. Elect's Environmental Transition Leader is Attorney for Dairy

(Santa Fe, NM) New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry denied a discharge permit for Ruch Dairy – formerly K & B Dairy -- in Hobbs because of repeated noncompliance with state groundwater regulations. The dairy operated without an authorized permit from the department.

The owners of the dairy, John and Marta Ruch, sought a discharge permit of up to 40,000 gallons a day of dairy wastewater and land application of that wastewater to 100 acres of crop land.

“This dairy has been a flagrant violator of state environmental laws, including operating without a valid permit,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “The dairy’s owners failed to operate in a responsible manner that would protect New Mexico’s limited groundwater supplies.”

The facility has a history of noncompliance with state groundwater regulations, including confirmed groundwater contamination and numbers spills of waste water, storm water and potable water. Four members of the community urged Secretary Curry to deny the permit because of issues from the dairy related to odors, flies and noncompliance with groundwater regulations. The Ground Water Bureau told the dairy in November 2009 that it did not have permission to discharge until the bureau issued a final version of the dairy’s permit. The dairy owners, however, continued to operate without a valid permit.

The denial requires the owners of the dairy to remove cows from the property within 60 days of the issuance of the Secretary’s denial. The dairy must at that time cease discharges on the property until a new groundwater discharge permit is approved.

Pete Domenici Jr., who is Gov.-Elect Susana Martinez’s Environmental Transition leader, is the attorney for the dairy owners.

For more information, call Marissa Stone Bardino at (505) 827-0314.

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