

SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNORDavid Martin, *Cabinet Secretary*Butch Tongate, *Acting Deputy Secretary***NEWS RELEASE****August 20, 2011**

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Environment Department Lifts “Boil Water Advisory” for South Hills Water Company in Bernalillo County

Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department’s (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau is lifting the “boil water advisory” for the South Hills Water Company Water System located in Bernalillo County.

NMED issued the advisory on August 10, 2011 after bacteriological contamination that exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for *E. coli* was discovered in drinking water at the water system. **The advisory only applied to customers served by the South Hills Water Company and did not extend to any of the other surrounding water systems or communities.**

Consumers of water at the South Hills Water Company water system were advised to boil the water for five minutes before drinking, cooking, dishwashing and bathing. The presence of *E. coli* in water indicates that the water may have been in contact with sewage or animal wastes, and could contain disease-causing organisms. Most strains of *E. coli* are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. However, a positive test for *E. coli* in the drinking water supply may indicate the presence of dangerous strains of *E. coli* or other disease-causing organisms. These types of organisms may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, death. Children, the elderly and immuno-compromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness.

The NMED Drinking Water Bureau provided technical assistance to the water system and determined that adequate disinfection (chlorination) was provided at a level that mitigates the potential threat to public health. The South Hills Water Company will maintain a regular monitoring schedule to ensure adequate levels of disinfection, as well as continue to test the distribution system for the presence of *E. coli*.

For more information, call NMED Communications Director Jim Winchester at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475 or Nora Romero, New Mexico Environment Department, Drinking Water Bureau, District I Manager, at (505) 222-9531.

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