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Immediate Release

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Environment Department Offers Free Domestic Water Well Testing in Alcalde

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) will test private domestic water wells in the Alcalde area, north of Española during July 17-28, 2006. The water testing is part of a statewide groundwater quality assessment. Tests will include electrical conductivity, dissolved oxygen, nitrate, iron and fluoride.

The testing is free, and participation is voluntary. If you agree to let us test your well, we will provide you with the results and be available to answer any questions you may have about the quality of your water.

People wishing to have their water tested should contact Marsha Gallegos, marsha.gallegos@state.nm.us, or call (505) 753-7256. Residents not at home on the days of the testing may authorize technicians to collect a water sample from an outside faucet and to determine the coordinates of wellheads with a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit.

Water supplied by public drinking water systems will not be tested, as those supplies are routinely tested pursuant to the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. If you are supplied by a public system, you should receive a Consumer Confidence Report each year from the system operator that summarizes test results. For additional information on public drinking water systems, please contact Mike Huber, mike.huber@state.nm.us, at 505-476-8638, or visit www.safewater.state.nm.us.

Previous testing by NMED has detected severe nitrate contamination in many wells in this area. Nitrate contamination can be caused by septic tank effluents, fertilizers, animal waste, and by natural geologic sources. For more information about nitrate contamination, see the NMED website, <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/Technical%20resources/haniteng.html>.

For additional information, contact Dennis McQuillan, NMED Environmental Health Manager, at (505) 476-8607. For media inquiries, contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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