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For Immediate Release
December 14, 2001

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Cebolla Water System Under Boil Water Order

The Cebolla Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association (MDWCA), located approximately 25 miles south of Chama, was put on a **Boil Water Order** on December 13, 2001, **due to bacteriological contamination that exceeded of the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for total coliform and E. Coli bacteria.** Customers of the Cebolla water system are advised to **boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking and dishwashing.**

Recent laboratory results indicated *E. coli* bacteria exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) at various points in the water system.

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 the bacteria. **The more dangerous strains of *E.coli*, often associated with contaminated food and water, may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death.**

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Children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness from these more dangerous strains. **Residents who have immediate health concerns related to this water quality issue should consult their health care provider.**

The NMED-DWB will continue to monitor the Cebolla water system and provide technical assistance through a site visitation scheduled for December 14, 2001.

For more information regarding the status of the water system, **contact Robert Gallegos, Hydrologist, NMED, at 1-877-654-8720 ext. 1034 or Darren Padilla, Hydrologist, NMED, at 1-877-654-8720 ext. 1044.**

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