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For Immediate Release

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## **Environment Department Issues “BOIL WATER ORDER” for Otis Water Cooperative**

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department’s (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau ordered the Otis Water Cooperative to issue a boil water advisory for its consumers.

The cooperative serves approximately 5,000 customers in Eddy County, which is about five miles southeast of Carlsbad. NMED ordered the “boil water order” today because it found to bacteriological contamination that exceeded The Maximum Contamination Level (MCL) for E. Coli at the cooperative. NMED requires that the owner and operator of the cooperative notify customers served by the system about the finding. Consumers of water at the cooperative are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking and washing dishes.

The presence of E. coli in water indicates the water may have been in contact with sewage and/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, which are sometimes found in sewage or animal wastes. These types of organisms may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death. Children, the elderly and immuno-compromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness.

Actions have been and will further be initiated to identify the possible source(s) of contamination, complete any mechanical repairs if applicable, establish acceptable disinfection, and flush out the water system. In addition, the Drinking Water Bureau will continue to assist with trouble-shooting to identify the source of the problem along with the assistance of their contractor, New Mexico Rural Water Association.

The New Mexico Department of Health has also been notified and will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue. Consumers of the water system may call (505) 827-0006, if they have any water-related health concerns. For more information, call Mike Huber, DWB-DII & IV Manager at (505) 476-8638 or Marissa Stone, Communications Director, at (505) 231-0475.

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