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## **Environment Department to Strengthen Controls on Concrete Batch Plants**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is in the process of implementing major changes in the way it regulates concrete batch plants. In the past, emissions from these plants were considered small enough that an air quality permit was not required in most cases. Based on new information from EPA, these plants will now have to apply to the NMED Air Quality Bureau for a permit. The Bureau has formed a working group to evaluate the various ways that this could be implemented and to formulate the best possible approach.

NMED is in the process of developing a General Construction Permit (GCP) for concrete batch plants. GCPs have been used before for industries like gravel crushers and hot-mix asphalt plants, with much success.

"GCPs work well for us, for the environment, and for industry," said Sandra Ely, Chief of NMED's Air Quality Bureau. "We streamline the permit process for any business that meets our predefined criteria. In return, we require them to take extra steps beyond the requirements of regular construction permits to maintain air quality and protect the environment."

One issue that must be addressed is the many concrete batch plants that are already constructed and in operation around New Mexico. The Bureau has announced that existing plants can continue to operate in their current configuration while the new permit approach is developed and refined.

Representatives of the concrete industry, related industries and members of the public are invited to participate in the formulation of the new permit, or to submit comments to the Bureau. Information about the permit development activities can be found on the NMED-AQB web site at: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb>. Click on the link to "General Construction Permit for Concrete Batch Plants (GCP- {Concrete})."

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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