



**GARY E. JOHNSON**  
GOVERNOR

*State of New Mexico*  
**ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

*Office of the Secretary*  
*Harold Runnels Building*  
*1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110*  
*Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110*  
*Telephone (505) 827-2855*  
*Fax (505) 827-2836*



**PETER MAGGIORE**  
SECRETARY

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Contact: Peter Maggiore, NMED Cabinet Secretary  
Phone: (505) 827-2855  
Contact: Cathy Tyson, NMED Communications Dir.  
Phone: (505) 827-0314

**State Environment Department Commits to Environmental Improvements  
Earth Day and Every Day**

(Santa Fe, NM) -- This year, one small group of New Mexicans will save 4,800 pounds of solid waste from being disposed at the landfill, 1,000 gallons of gasoline from being used (also decreasing carbon dioxide emissions), 23,000 gallons of water from being used, and add some bulk to their pocketbooks. These savings will be accomplished by managers, secretaries, financial analysts and scientists at the New Mexico Environment Department.

Both the New Mexico Environment Department and many of the individuals working at the Department have committed, this Earth Day, to additional actions to improve our air or water quality or to save natural resources. The commitments are in addition to the work of staff members every day to protect the environment and health of New Mexicans.

One of the simple concepts of Earth Day is that each of us, in our own way, must think and act as a responsible steward of the Earth. In an effort to support this concept on an individual, as well as organizational level, Environment Secretary Maggiore invited all 600-plus Department employees to commit to at least one activity for the next year to improve New Mexico's environment. Department management also made agency-wide commitments for better environmental performance.

"Most of us work hard to do what we can for the environment," said Maggiore. "But we asked everyone, if they could think of just one more effort they could make for the year."

What were the results? Department employees developed an impressive list of personal commitments, many with quantifiable savings to the Earth.

Some of the easier efforts included taking cloth bags to the supermarket, or reusing old supermarket bags; walking, biking, bussing or car-pooling one day a week; gardening without pesticides and herbicides; installing a programmable thermostat; and, donating money to environmental causes.

The more interesting ideas included buying chlorine-free paper to support products and industry that produce less air pollution; writing government officials to request they attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development (in Johannesburg, South Africa, August 26 - Sept. 4, 2002); install a clothes line to replace the electric dryer; use bath tub water to water plants; build soil berms on a sloped lawn to reduce runoff; and, support native pollinators, such as bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, by planting native wildflowers, providing nesting sites and using organic gardening techniques.

“We hope that showing others how quickly their actions add up will help them realize that the commitments, even small ones, made by each of us are very important,” said Maggiore.

In addition to the personal commitments, Department management established environmental goals for the organization for the next year. These include:

- Converting the entire Department to purchasing only recycled-content, kenaf, or chlorine-free paper (creating recycling markets and supporting cleaner, more sustainable industries);
- Increasing electronic commerce (saving transportation costs and reducing air pollution);
- Implementing a Department-wide management plan for vehicle use, including alternative fuel vehicles (reducing the number of miles traveled by department staff and the number of cars needed, and increasing use of alternative-fuel vehicles, thus reducing gasoline consumption, air emissions, hazardous fluid production and disposal, and costs); and,
- Implementing a flex-time policy (reducing transportation and saving gasoline, air emissions and vehicle maintenance costs)

For more on specific environment department commitments and the estimated associated environmental savings, visit the Department web site at [www.nmenv.state.nm.us](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us).

For more information, contact Cathy Tyson, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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