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Secretary Ron Curry Appointed to EPA's Good Neighbor Environmental Board to Address Environmental and Quality-of-Life Issues Along The U.S.-Mexico Border

(Santa Fe, NM) — New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary Ron Curry was recently named to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Good Neighbor Environmental Board, an independent federal advisory committee on environmental sustainability along the U.S.-Mexico border region.

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board advises the president and Congress on a wide range of issues related to environmental and infrastructure needs within the U.S.-Mexico border region.

"I am honored to be a part of this important Board and to have the opportunity to elevate the awareness of environmental and environmental justice issues not just along the New Mexico border, but along the entire border region," Secretary Curry said.

Secretary Curry's term on the Board began February 1 and will end February 1, 2008. The Board's next meeting is March 14-15 in Washington, D.C. and will open with its ninth report to the President and Congress. The full agenda is available online at www.epa.gov/ocem/gneb/Agendas/2005_mar_agenda.htm.

Environmental and quality-of-life issues along New Mexico's border region have received increased scrutiny from the Department under the leadership of Governor Bill Richardson. In November, the Department sponsored a Colonias Summit in Las Cruces to identify priority issues for communities in the area that have been historically under-served. In January, the Department held a series of five follow-up Juntas Comunitarias, or community forums, that sought to identify priority needs of specific areas within the lower Rio Grande valley.

In November, Governor Richardson signed the Executive Order on Environmental Justice (2005-056) in Las Cruces that requires all state agencies and commissions to review policies and procedures to ensure the public, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, income or education level, has a meaningful opportunity to be involved in decisions that may affect environmental quality and health. The order also requires that all programs and policies to protect and promote human health and the environment be reviewed annually to ensure low-income and communities of color are not exposed disproportionately to environmental hazards and risks.

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