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Secretary Ron Curry Emphasizes Colonias Infrastructure Issues on EPA Good Neighbor Environmental Board

(Santa Fe, NM) — New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary Ron Curry said that infrastructure issues related to public health and security will get careful review before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Good Neighbor Environmental Board.

Curry was recently named to the EPA's Board whose focus is to address environmental sustainability along the U.S.-Mexico border. Curry was appointed to the Board's public health subcommittee at its most recent meeting this week in Washington, D.C.

"Governor Richardson has made helping the colonias along the U.S-Mexico border a priority and has targeted \$5 million for water and wastewater projects that will address public health and safety issues in this area," Secretary Curry said. "The Board's public health subcommittee will look at the best ways to handle the border's shared infrastructure, such as wastewater and drinking water systems, and will bring those issues and possible solutions before the entire board for consideration."

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board is an independent federal advisory committee. Its mission is to advise the U.S. president and Congress on good neighbor practices along the U.S. border with Mexico, and its recommendations are focused on environmental infrastructure needs in the U.S. states contiguous to Mexico.

The Board's ninth report, *U.S.-Mexico Border Environment: Air Quality and Transportation and Cultural and Natural Resource*, is available on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/ocem/gneb/>.

"Air quality along the 1,952-mile [3,141-kilometer] international border that separates the United States and Mexico is of great concern due to its effect on public health," the report says in its introduction.

"Border-region air pollutants originate from a variety of sources," it continues, "including open-air burning [trash, residential heating and brick kilns], unpaved roads, windblown dust, power plants, area sources such as dry cleaners, industrial facilities and transportation activities."

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