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New Mexico Environment Department Takes Action to Fight haze and Improve Air Quality Public Invited to Get Involved at Open House

(Santa Fe, NM)—The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is hosting an open house Wednesday, September 24 to give the public a chance to learn the causes and effects of hazy conditions and learn about the NMED's plan to improve air quality. The open house will be held from 3:00 to 7:00 pm at the Air Quality Bureau's conference room, 2052 Galisteo Street, in Santa Fe.

"Most days New Mexicans are lucky, we look out the window and see the clear views and crystalline skies we expect," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "However, haze is regularly an issue here, whether it be from forest fires or industrial sources. We're looking for public input and support to help attack this problem, protect visibility and improve air quality in New Mexico."

Haze is made up of smoke, dust, moisture, and vapor suspended in air and can impair visibility. The term regional haze means haze that impairs visibility in all directions over a large area. Sources hundreds or even thousands of miles away can contribute to visibility problems at remote locations, such as national parks.

Specific strategies for reducing regional haze will be discussed at the open house, including reducing smoke, preventing air pollution through energy efficiency, reducing dust from dirt roads, reducing air pollution from industrial sources, reducing pollution from vehicles (mobile sources), and other measures to reduce haze-producing air pollution.

NMED plans to host additional open houses at other locations in New Mexico in the near future. The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board has scheduled a public hearing on the regional haze plan and associated regulations beginning on November 17 in Santa Fe.

For more information, please see the Air Quality Bureau's website at <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/index.html> and click on "Regional Haze" or contact Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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