



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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For Immediate Release

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(Santa Fe, NM) – An annual report released this week by the American Lung Association shows that three of New Mexico’s cities – Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Farmington – are among the top 10 cleanest cities in the nation.

The study tracked pollutants including smog, nitrogen oxides and soot. Soot levels continue to drop in the west, even in areas that rank historically high in particle pollution, according to the report, called State of the Air: 2007 (<http://www.lungusa.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=40404&ct=3834289>). In the east, higher soot levels are linked to the generation of electricity by polluting power plants.

“I set high goals for New Mexico’s environment and this report confirms what I have said before – our state is among the cleanest in the country. The state will continue to do even more to create greater reductions in air pollution.” said Gov. Richardson. “One reason our cities received a grade of A is that the Environment Department has been aggressive in enforcing state laws for power plants and industry that contribute to air pollution.”

“The state now has measures in place that require power plants to achieve additional emissions reductions to protect the health of residents,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “We also look closely at companies who violate state air quality permits or regulations and on a case by case basis, tailor requirements to provide additional ongoing emissions reductions.”

In the future, there will be even greater reductions of air pollutants in New Mexico. PNM’s San Juan Generating Station in the four corners area will install new equipment, including burners that emit lower quantities of nitrogen oxides than regular burners.

The Environment Department also requires new coal fired power plants to consider best available control technology, which provides maximum protection from air pollution. The department also asks power plants to

consider the installation of integrated gasification combined cycle systems, a state of the art pollution control technology for coal-fired power plants.

The study also shows one-third of the country's population lives in counties with short-term levels of smog. However, many New Mexicans are benefiting from cleaner air.

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