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NMED Issues “Boil Water Alert” for Vallecitos MDWCA in Rio Arriba County

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department’s (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau advised the Vallecitos Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association in Rio Arriba County to issue a “boil water order” for its water system.

NMED issued the advisory after determining the Vallecitos MDWCA water system has exceeded the maximum allowable turbidity level. NMED requires the water system, located in Rio Arriba County about 45 miles northwest of Española, to notify its consumers of the findings.

Customers of the water system are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking and dishwashing.

Turbidity has no health effects. However, turbidity can interfere with disinfection (chlorine residuals) and provide a medium for microbial growth. High turbidity levels may indicate the presence of disease causing organisms.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets drinking water standards and has determined that the presence of microbiological contaminants are a health concern at certain levels of exposure. If water is inadequately treated, microbiological contaminants in the water may cause disease. Disease symptoms may include diarrhea, cramps, nausea, and possibly jaundice, and any associated headaches and fatigue. These symptoms, however, are not just associated with disease causing organisms in drinking water. EPA has set enforceable requirements for treating drinking water to reduce the risk of these adverse health effects. Treatment such as filtering and disinfecting the water removes or destroys microbiological contaminants. Drinking water, which is treated to meet EPA requirements, is associated with little to none of this risk and should be considered safe.

Actions have been initiated to correct and reduce the levels of turbidity entering the distribution system. The Drinking Water Bureau will continue to assist the water system and help identify the source of the problem.

For more information, call NMED Communications Director Marissa Stone at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475 or NMED District Manager Mike Huber at (505) 476-8638.

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