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Immediate Release

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**NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT RADIATION LICENSING FEE APPROVED**

(Santa Fe, NM) -- The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board recently approved the New Mexico Environment Department's proposed radiation licensing fee regulation. The regulation allows the Department to collect fees, which will be used to improve implementation of the radiation-licensing program to ensure that the state retains regulatory authority with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for the state radiation protection program, as well as to better protect people and the environment from unnecessary exposure to radioactive materials.

Until the EIB approved the regulation allowing for the radiation licensing fee, New Mexico was the only state with regulatory authority that did not charge a fee. The statute required that fees not exceed those charged by the NRC.

The Department's Radiation Protection program issues licenses for approximately 220 users of radioactive materials, including nuclear medicine departments, research laboratories, oil and gas operations, road construction and other commercial and industrial applications. The legislation authorizing the assessment of fees, adopted in 2000, specifically exempted x-ray machine users from paying fees.

Improvements to the program will include increased staff, increased inspections, the purchase of modern test instrumentation, increased technical training for staff, and increased technical consultation services provided to the regulated industry.

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A copy of the final radiation licensing fee regulation is available from the NMED website at  
<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us>.

For more information, contact Cecilia Williams, Chief, Radiation Control Bureau, or Cathy Tyson,  
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