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**State Environment Department Asks EPA to Add
Roswell Ground Water Contamination to Superfund List**

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), with Governor Gary Johnson’s support, sent a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) last week supporting placement of a ground-water contamination plume in Roswell on the federal Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), making the site eligible for federal clean up funds.

The plume in Roswell, called the McGaffey and Main Ground Water Plume Site, includes soil and a shallow aquifer contaminated by perchloroethylene, or “perc.” The contamination is believed to be from a former dry cleaning operation. The plume is at least 1 mile long and has affected 12 private wells. Three affected private wells which were the sole supply of drinking water for households have since been connected to the city water supply. Perchloroethylene concentrations in ground water as high as 27,000 parts per billion (ppb) have been detected in ground water samples collected near the former dry cleaner. The New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission standard for perchloroethylene in ground water is 20 ppb.

Based on an initial investigation of the contamination and comparison with two similar sites in the state, the NMED expects the initial capital expenses and the first five years of remediation of the ground water

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and soil contamination to cost approximately \$5 million. If the site is listed on the Superfund NPL, the state will have to pay only 10 percent, or \$500,000, of that amount.

The move to list the South Roswell site has been supported by the Chaves County Commission and the Mayor of Roswell. They and the NMED say that the threat posed to the underlying aquifer, which is widely used for drinking and irrigation water, is significant; and the Superfund program ~~Trust Fund~~ is the most feasible mechanism available to fund clean up.

There are eleven designated Superfund NPL sites in New Mexico. Four of those are receiving federal funding for clean up. The remaining seven are being paid for by “potentially responsible parties.”

Superfund NPL sites follow a process of site investigation, selection of a remedy to cleanup the contamination, and implementation of the remedy. There will be opportunities for the public to provide input on these activities for the McGaffey and Main Ground Water Plume Site.

For additional information, please contact George Schuman, Superfund Program Manager, NMED, at (505) 827-0072, or Cathy Tyson, Communications Director, NMED, at (505) 827-0314.

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