



Bill Richardson  
Governor

**NEW MEXICO  
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

*Office of the Secretary*

Harold Runnels Building  
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)  
PO Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM 87502  
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836  
www.nmenv.state.nm.us



Ron Curry  
Secretary  
Jon Goldstein  
Deputy Secretary

July 10, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Contact: Marissa Stone Bardino, NMED Communications Director  
(505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475

**Environment Department Receives Plan to Investigate Groundwater Contamination  
at El Paso Electric's Rio Grande Power Plant in Sunland Park**

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department received a Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal to investigate groundwater contamination at El Paso Electric Company's Rio Grande Power Plant in Sunland Park.

The department's Ground Water Quality Bureau required in March that the facility submit a proposal to investigate the extent of soil and groundwater contamination at the facility, which is located at 3501 Doniphan Drive, in March 2009.

The Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposes the excavation of contaminated soil, the installation of soil borings and a monitoring well, and the collection of soil and ground water samples to define the extent of soil and groundwater pollution.

The power generating station uses natural gas and fuel oil to generate electricity. Fuel oil is stored in several above ground storage tanks. Past spills from those tank systems contaminated soil and groundwater. Groundwater is contaminated with light non-aqueous phase liquid and benzo (a) pyrene contamination has been detected above the state ground water standard. The depth to groundwater across the site is approximately 5 feet below ground.

New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission regulations require responsible parties to remediate groundwater pollution. After the investigation is completed, a Stage 2 cleanup proposal will be submitted to NMED. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Stage 2 cleanup proposal and request a hearing or meeting. Public comment will be sought by NMED within 90 days of receiving the cleanup plan.

For more information please contact Marissa Stone Bardino at (505) 827-0314.

###