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**Environment Department Issues “Boil Water Alert” for El Prado Water & Sanitation District in Taos County**

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department’s Drinking Water Bureau advised the El Prado Water & Sanitation District system in Taos County to issue a “boil water order” for its water system.

NMED issued the advisory today after bacteriological contamination that exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for E. coli was discovered in drinking water from the district. NMED requires the district, a water system located on the north end of Taos, to notify its consumers of the finding.

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

The presence of E. coli in water indicates that the water may have been in contact with sewage or animal wastes, and could contain disease-causing organisms. Most strains of E. coli are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. However, a positive test for E. coli in the drinking water supply may indicate the presence of dangerous strains of E. coli or other disease-causing organisms, which are sometimes found in sewage or animal wastes. These types of organisms may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death. Children, the elderly and immuno-compromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness.

Actions have been initiated to disinfect the water system and identify possible sources of contamination. The Drinking Water Bureau will continue to assist the El Prado Water & Sanitation district to help identify the source of the problem.

For more information, call NMED Communications Director Marissa Stone at (505) 827-0314 or Mike Huber with the NMED-Drinking Water Bureau at (505) 476-8638.

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