



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

March 2, 2009  
For Immediate Release

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

**Environment Department Issues Notice of Violation to Developer of Las Cruces  
Subdivision for Operating Illegal Sewage System**

(Santa Fe, NM) The New Mexico Environment Department issued a notice of violation to the developers of La Mancha Estates Subdivision in Las Cruces for discharging sewage effluent without a state permit.

The owner of La Mancha, Philip Philipou, has allowed the operation of septic tank leachfields in the subdivision without a state Ground Water Discharge Permit. The subdivision lies along the Rio Grande flood plain in an area with shallow depth to groundwater.

“The operation of illegal septic systems without approved state permits puts groundwater, the environment and public health at risk,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “The developers failed to obtain required easements to connect sewer lines from the subdivision to the City of Las Cruces’ Wastewater Treatment Plant but chose to allow people to move into homes anyway.”

NMED determined that approximately 15 out of 100 lots at the subdivision were occupied and homes were connected to unpermitted septic tank leachfield systems. Logos Development, the developers of the property, submitted notices of intent to the department in March 2008 for the two systems that may receive over 2,000 gallons per day of sewage. The Ground Water Quality Bureau responded to those notices by requiring the company to submit a Ground Water Discharge Permit application by June 20, 2008. The bureau determined that because of shallow groundwater on the property, the subdivision would require a holding tank system or a treatment unit to reduce the level of nitrogen contamination in sewage prior to discharging to the two leachfields. The department has not received an application from the developer.

The notice requires Logos Development to submit a permit application by April 6 that proposes either a holding tank system or a treatment unit. The company’s other option is to reduce the sewage volumes from the systems to under 2,000 gallons a day and obtain Liquid Waste Permits from the department’s Environmental Health Division. The department recognizes that the best solution to protect groundwater and public health is for the subdivision to be connected to the Las Cruces municipal sewer system.

The owner could face civil penalties of \$15,000 a day for each violation of state regulations or \$10,000 a day for each violation of the Water Quality Act if he fails to comply.

For more information, call Marissa Stone at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475.

###