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March 12, 2009
For Immediate Release

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Environment Department Receives Plan to Investigate Surface and Groundwater Contamination at Williams Energy's Nacimiento Copper Mine near Cuba

(Santa Fe, N.M.) The New Mexico Environment Department's Ground Water Quality Bureau received a Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal to investigate surface and ground water contamination at the Nacimiento Copper Mine near Cuba.

Monitoring wells at the facility, located approximately six miles east of Cuba on NM Highway 126, showed concentrations of total dissolved solids, sulfate, chloride, cobalt, manganese, selenium and uranium in excess of New Mexico groundwater standards during past investigations. The depth to groundwater at the site ranges from 0 to 39 feet. In a letter to Williams Energy, NMED required that an Abatement Plan proposal be submitted within 60 days of notification.

The Stage 1 Abatement Plan submitted by the company proposes collecting soil, surface water and groundwater samples and installing monitoring wells to define the extent of soil and ground water pollution.

New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission regulations require responsible parties to remediate surface and groundwater pollution. After the investigation is completed, the company will submit a Stage 2 cleanup proposal to NMED. Williams Energy must issue a public notice of the Stage 2 cleanup proposal within 30 days of submitting the proposal to NMED. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Stage 2 cleanup proposal and request a hearing or meeting. NMED will seek written comments from the public within 60 days of determining that the cleanup proposal is administratively complete.

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