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**Environment Department Issues “DRINKING WATER WARNING” Advisory for Homestead Water Co.**

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department’s (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau has issued a “DRINKING WATER WARNING” advisory for consumers of the Homestead Water Company.

Homestead Water Company serves approximately 120 customers in Torrance County. The Homestead Water Company was put on a “DRINKING WATER WARNING” advisory due to nitrate levels that exceeded the Maximum Contamination Level. NMED has required that the system owner and operator notify all customers served by the system of this finding.

Consumers of the water are advised to:

**AVOID GIVING THE WATER TO INFANTS.**

Infants below the age of six months who drink water containing nitrate in excess of the MCL could become seriously ill, and if not treated, consumption could result in death. The serious illness in infants is due to the conversion of nitrate to nitrite by the body, which can interfere with the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood (methemoglobinemia, also known as “blue baby syndrome”). This can be an acute condition in which health deteriorates rapidly over a period of days. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blueness of the skin. If symptoms occur, seek medical attention immediately. Water, juice, and formula for children under six months of age that is prepared with tap water should be avoided. Bottled water or other water low in nitrates should be used for infants until further notice.

**AVOID BOILING THE WATER.** Boiling, freezing, filtering, or letting water stand does not reduce the nitrate level. Boiling can make the nitrates more concentrated, because nitrates remain behind when water evaporates.

Healthy adults should exercise caution in drinking the water, as long-term exposure to high levels of nitrates in drinking water has been associated with diuresis, increased starchy deposits and hemorrhaging of the spleen. Research indicates that long-term exposure can also lead to an increased risk of certain types of cancer. If you are pregnant or have specific health concerns, you should consult your doctor prior to ingesting the water.

Actions have been initiated to correct and reduce the threat to public health at this water system. The Drinking Water Bureau will continue to assist the water system and help identify the source of the problem. An enforcement action will be issued requiring a corrective action plan to correct and reduce the threat to public health at this water system.

For more information, call NMED District Manager Mike Huber at (505) 476-8638.

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