NEWS RELEASE

The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

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State to offer free water testing for those impacted by flooding

Impacted communities invited to get their private well water tested

SAN JUAN COUNTY, N.M — Following historic rainfall and flooding in San Juan County and surrounding communities, the New Mexico Environment Department and New Mexico Department of Health are offering a free emergency water testing event for residents who rely on private wells for drinking water.

NMED and DOH are hosting two Sampling and Assessing Flood Emergencies (SAFE) events this week:

Bloomfield Public Library – 333 S. 1st Street, Bloomfield, New Mexico 87413

- Wednesday, Nov. 4, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. (sampling kit pickup only)
- Thursday, Nov. 5, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (sampling kit pickup and dropoff)

Aztec City Hall - 201 W. Chaco St., Aztec, New Mexico, 87410

- Thursday, Nov. 5 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. (sampling kit pickup only)
- Friday, Nov. 6 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. (sampling kit pickup) and 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (sampling kit drop off)

"Flooding can contaminate private drinking water wells, creating potential health risks for residents. That's why it is so important that we help families understand the safety of their water through well testing," said **Environment Secretary James Kenney**. "Based on the test results, we can provide recommendations, which may include boiling water before use, installing appropriate treatment systems, or taking other steps to ensure the water is safe to drink."

Residents needing drinking water well testing, will need to:

1. Visit a SAFE Event to pick up a sampling kit.
2. Follow the instructions provided with the sampling kit to collect well water sample. Do not go into an evacuated area to collect the sample.
3. If the home has a whole-house filtration system, collect the water at the well head prior to any filtration or softener systems, if possible.

4. Complete the form included with the sampling kit.
5. Return the sample bottles and complete form **on the same day the sample is collected** to the open SAFE event location.

Well owners who cannot attend may send sample bottles and the completed form with a family member or neighbor. Only water that comes from homes that rely on private wells for drinking water will be accepted. A contractor working for NMED, Eastern Research Group (ERG), will text or call with bacteria test results within a few days. All other test results will be emailed or texted to participating households following the event within two to three weeks.

If residents have questions about NMED's free flood well testing, please call the Flood Well Test hotline at (505) 628-7130 or email FloodWellTest@erg.com.

New Mexico residents with wells submerged by the floods or near flooded areas should use only disinfected water (rolling boil for at least one minute) or bottled water for cooking and drinking. Residents may be able to continue using their well water after they disinfect their wells and test their well water.

Tests will show if bacteria are present in well water. Well water that has bacteria present is unsafe to use for drinking and cooking.

Additional SAFE support will be coordinated with other impacted communities, including Socorro County, in the coming weeks.

Community members concerned about septic system safety during floods can contact the NMED Farmington office at 505-566-9741. Additional information about septic system safety can be found at https://www.env.nm.gov/septic/septic-safety-information/.

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