

NOTICE OF PETITION TO NOMINATE SURFACE WATERS OF THE STATE FOR DESIGNATION AS OUTSTANDING NATIONAL RESOURCE WATERS

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) gives public notice of a draft petition to nominate (nomination) certain surface waters of the state as outstanding national resource waters (ONRW). Accordingly, NMED developed regulatory language to amend *Standards for Interstate and Intrastate Surface Waters*, 20.6.4 NMAC, to designate these waters as ONRWs. The waters qualify for ONRW designation as significant attributes of a Special Trout Water; a designated wild river; a national or state park, monument, or wildlife refuge; or a designated Wilderness area. ONRWs are entitled to the highest protection from pollution under the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission's (WQCC) surface water quality standards at 20.6.4 NMAC.

NMED will hold a 30-day public comment period on this proposed action starting on July 20, 2024, and ending on August 19, 2024 at 5:00 PM MDT. Comments will be accepted via mail, email, and NMED's smart comment portal at <https://nmed.commentinput.com/comment/search>. The draft nomination, amended regulatory language, and all other related information may be found on NMED's website through the Smart Comment Portal or at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wqs/>. The petition and appendices contain a list of waters nominated, maps, baseline water quality data, and other supporting information for the nomination. Additionally, an interactive GIS map with the proposed ONRWs is available at <https://gis.web.env.nm.gov/oem/?map=swqb>.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, NMED will consider input received and if appropriate, make amendments to its nomination. NMED intends on filing a petition and requesting a public rulemaking hearing at the September 2024 regular meeting of the WQCC. If the WQCC grants a public hearing, the SWQB will publish a notice of rulemaking at least 60 days prior to the hearing in the New Mexico Register, in the Albuquerque Journal, and on NMED's website. That notice will include the date, time, and place of the hearing and how to participate in the hearing, including instructions for joining virtually, submitting public comment, and filing technical testimony.

For more information and to submit comments contact Michael Baca, Water Quality Standards Coordinator, NMED SWQB, P.O. Box 5469, Santa Fe, NM, 87502, (505) 470-1652 or michael.baca1@env.nm.gov. To stay up to date with the latest news from NMED, please sign up for our listserv at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NMED/subscriber/new?topic_id=NMED_4.

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