



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270

February 8, 2023

Shelly Lemon, Chief
Surface Water Quality Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
1190 Saint Francis Drive, Suite N4050
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

RE: Designation of Outstanding National Resource Waters in the State of New Mexico's *Standards for Interstate and Intrastate Surface Waters* (20.6.4 NMAC)

Dear Ms. Lemon:

I am writing in response to your letter of October 24, 2022, requesting review and action on revisions to New Mexico's *Standards for Interstate and Intrastate Surface Waters* 20.6.4 New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC). These revisions designating Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) were submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as required under federal regulations at 40 CFR § 131.5. The revised water quality standards were certified by Christal Weatherly, Special Assistant Attorney General for the State of New Mexico, as having been adopted pursuant to the laws of the state of New Mexico and became effective as state law on September 24, 2022. The EPA received the submission under New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Cabinet Secretary delegated signatory authority on October 24, 2022.

I am pleased to inform you that in today's action, the EPA is approving the results of two independent public Water Quality Control Commission (Commission) hearings to designate waters in New Mexico as ONRWs within its discretionary authority pursuant to CWA § 303(c) and its implementing regulations at 40 CFR Part 131. The EPA's approval is specific to all waters of the state within the "upper Pecos watershed" upstream of the Dalton Canyon Creek Day Use Area to the U.S. Forest Service Wilderness Boundary ("Pecos ONRW") [Commission Docketed Matter 21-51(R)] and the Rio Grande from directly upstream of the Rio Pueblo de Taos to the New Mexico-Colorado state border, the Rio Hondo from the Carson National Forest boundary to its headwaters, Lake Fork Creek from the Rio Hondo to its headwaters, the East Fork Jemez River from San Antonio Creek to its headwaters, San Antonio Creek from the East Fork Jemez River to its headwaters, and Redondo creek from Sulphur Creek to its headwaters ("Rio Grande-Hondo-Jemez ONRW") [Commission Docketed Matter 21-62(R)]. The EPA is not approving the New Mexico water quality standards for those waters or portions of waters located in Indian Country, as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1151.

I would like to thank the Commission, the NMED and the Surface Water Quality Bureau for their commitment and hard work with citizens of New Mexico in revising the state's water quality standards to designate these waters as ONRWs. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (214) 665-7101, or have your staff contact Russell Nelson at (214) 665-6646 or Jasmin Diaz-Lopez at (214) 665-2733.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Troy C. Hill". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and "H".

Troy C. Hill
Acting Director
Water Division

cc: James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary (James.Kenney@env.nm.gov)
David Sypher, Municipal and County Representative, WQCC Vice Chair
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