Notice of Public Review Draft, Public Comment Period, and Informational Meeting

2026 Triennial Review of New Mexico's Water Quality Standards (20.6.4 NMAC)

The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) invites the public to comment on NMED's draft amendments to the State's Standards for Interstate and Intrastate Surface Waters, 20.6.4 New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC). **The 60-day public comment period for the draft amendments begins August 15, 2025 and closes October 14, 2025.**

Please note that comments submitted to NMED SWQB on the Public Review Draft are for further developing the draft amendments prior to petitioning the Water Quality Control Commission for a rulemaking hearing. An additional public comment period will be held in conjunction with the rulemaking hearing pursuant to 20.1.6.204(B) NMAC.

Background

It is the objective of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters, including those in New Mexico. As part of upholding the objective of the CWA, the State of New Mexico is required by statute to adopt water quality standards that protect the public health or welfare and enhance the quality of water, and are consistent with and serve the purposes of the New Mexico Water Quality Act (WQA) and the federal CWA. New Mexico's surface water quality standards are codified under 20.6.4 NMAC.

In accordance with Section 303(c)(1) of the CWA and 20.6.4.10 NMAC, States are required to hold public hearings at least once every three years to review, amend, and adopt water quality standards, as applicable. This is referred to as a "Triennial Review." Pursuant to Section 74-6-4(F) of the WQA, the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) delegated NMED the responsibility for organizing and proposing amendments to the state's surface water quality standards.

The last Triennial Review of the state's surface water quality standards was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in January 2023. Therefore, NMED is initiating the current Triennial Review process by providing NMED's draft amendments to the public for comment. NMED intends to consider public comments and petition the WQCC by the end of 2025 for a hearing in the second half of 2026.

How to participate

Comments will be accepted via mail, email, and NMED's smart comment portal at https://nmed.commentinput.com/comment/search. The public review draft 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/2026-triennial-review/. The public review draft contains draft amendments to the regulatory language along with rationale for each amendment.

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.

Public Meeting
In addition, NMED SWQB will be hosting a virtual informational meeting via WebEx to present and discuss the draft amendments to the State's Standards for Interstate and Intrastate Surface Waters, 20.6.4 NMAC, and provide a forum for interested parties and the public to ask questions. Information regarding this meeting is as follows:

Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 5:30 pm
To connect via video conference, go to: https://nmed-oit.webex.com/nmed-oit/j.php?MTID=mcef4d38bc6992f8d56094eb92a5cbe4d
Meeting number/access code:2861 793 5532
Password: XFer7qTYf32
Join by phone:+1-415-655-0001 US Toll

If you have difficulties logging on to the meeting at the scheduled time, please contact Lynette Guevara at 505-629-8811 or lynette.guevara@env.nm.gov.

Persons having a disability or requiring assistance or auxiliary aid to participate in this public process should contact the NMED Human Resources Bureau at least 10 days before any scheduled meeting, by mail at P.O. Box 5469, 1190 St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87502, telephone 505-487-0348. TDD or TDY users please access HRB via the New Mexico Relay Network at 1-800-659-8331.