

**THE NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT, SURFACE WATER QUALITY BUREAU PROPOSE TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS (TMDLs) FOR THE LOWER RIO GRANDE WATERSHED**

**NOTICE OF A 15-DAY EXTENSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) is inviting the public to comment on the draft "total maximum daily load" (TMDL) document for the Lower Rio Grande Watershed, defined as from the Texas Border to Elephant Butte Dam. Draft TMDLs in this document include:

- *E. coli*: Rio Grande (Texas Border to Leasburg Dam)
- *E. coli*: Rio Grande (Leasburg Dam to Percha Dam)

A TMDL is a planning document that establishes specific goals to meet water quality standards in water bodies where pollutant limits are exceeded. It includes current pollution loadings, reduction estimates for pollutants, information on probable sources of pollution, and suggestions to restore or protect the health of the waterbody.

The 30-day comment period on this document has been extended to 45 days. The comment period opened February 23, 2007 and will close April 9, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. MDT. Formal comments for inclusion in the public record must be submitted in writing, to **Shelly Drinkard, mailing address NMED SWQB, Room N2109, P.O. Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM, 87502; fax number (505) 827-0160; or e-mail: <[Shelly.Drinkard@state.nm.us](mailto:Shelly.Drinkard@state.nm.us)>** (if possible, please submit an electronic copy in addition to paper).

A public meeting was held to summarize the information and to provide a forum for interested parties to ask questions and provide comments. The meeting date is set approximately halfway through the comment period to allow the public time to review the document and generate questions or comments. The meeting was held on March 13 from 6-8pm in Las Cruces at the Las Cruces City Hall in the City Council Chambers, 200 N. Church Street.

Following the close of the comment period, copies of the draft final document will be mailed to all persons who submitted timely comments and will be available electronically on the bureau's website or by contacting the bureau at the address above. The SWQB will request approval of the draft final TMDLs at the Water Quality Control Commission's (WQCC) regularly scheduled meeting on May 8, 2007. WQCC agendas are available at: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/wqcc/index.html>.

For more information, please contact Shelly Drinkard or Jill Turner at the address or phone number provided above.

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