



NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT



Surface Water Quality Bureau

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Surface Water Quality Bureau Seeks Public Input
for Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards

The Surface Water Quality Bureau is beginning preparations for the next Triennial Review of New Mexico's Surface Water Quality Standards. Such a review must be conducted periodically as required by the federal Clean Water Act and EPA regulations. **The public is invited to identify issues of concern in the standards and to propose revisions for consideration.**

The Water Quality Standards ([20.6.4 NMAC](#)) establish designated uses for surface waters across the state, specify water quality criteria to protect those uses and contain an antidegradation policy. The Bureau has identified a number of issues that may need attention during the upcoming review. Among the significant changes under consideration are the following:

- Addition of narrative biocriteria to protect the health of aquatic biological communities
- Addition of salinity criteria to protect irrigation and livestock watering uses of the Pecos River and other streams
- Revision of hydrologic definitions (ephemeral, intermittent, perennial) to accommodate periodic drought conditions
- Revisions to clarify applicability of criteria when water quality impairment is due to natural causes
- Updates to human health and domestic water supply criteria based on EPA's most recent recommendations
- Revisions to segment-specific criteria to refine protections for existing and designated uses.

Interested parties may comment on these areas or others. Suggestions may apply to statewide provisions or only to a particular water body. Please direct any comments **by Friday, November 30, 2007** to:

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Additional information about water quality and the standards in general is available on the Surface Water Quality Bureau's website <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/SWQB/>.

Please note that this is the scoping phase of the Triennial Review preparations; there will be opportunities to comment on specific proposals at a later date.