

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary
Jennifer J. Pruet, Deputy Secretary**NEWS RELEASE***For Immediate Release***May 30, 2019***The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.***Contact:** Maddy Hayden, Communications Director
New Mexico Environment Department
505.231.8800 | maddy.hayden@state.nm.us**Public comment period opens for Volkswagen settlement guidelines***Next application cycle will target alternative-fueled vehicles, charging infrastructure***SANTA FE** — The New Mexico Environment Department is seeking public comments on its Beneficiary Mitigation Plan, which outlines how funds received as part of the 2017 Volkswagen (VW) settlement agreement will be used.

The Environment Department (NMED) is recommending funds be awarded for projects involving alternative-fueled vehicles and light duty zero emission electric vehicle charging infrastructure in support of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's commitment to reducing emissions in the state.

"Using the VW settlement funding to focus on alternative and electric vehicle infrastructure will lower harmful air emissions while connecting our urban and rural communities," Environment Department Secretary James Kenney said. "This approach will assist in mitigating the state's growing ozone problem through renewable energy investments – a win for all New Mexicans."

The plan may be viewed here: <https://www.env.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/VW-Revised-BMP-5.30.19-Final.pdf>. Comments will be accepted through June 29 and may be submitted to vw.info@state.nm.us. After the comment period ends, NMED will finalize the plan and open the application period in July. The VW settlement funds are available to public and private entities, as well as tribes and pueblos.

The federal settlement was reached after VW admitted to installing devices on diesel passenger vehicles that misrepresented the amount of emissions during U.S. testing, resulting in excess emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx). NOx emissions are responsible for increased nitrogen dioxide and ozone concentrations, which cause adverse effects to human health and the environment.

Under the Consent Decree, New Mexico will ultimately receive approximately \$18 million to implement projects that reduce NOx emissions from vehicles. Approximately \$6 million was allocated to projects in 2018, leaving around \$12 million for future projects. Eligible mitigation projects include the replacement of heavy-duty diesel-fueled freight trucks; school, shuttle, or transit buses; forklifts; and airport ground support equipment.

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