



Environment Department

SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR

Ryan Flynn, Cabinet Secretary
Butch Tongate, Deputy Secretary

NEWS RELEASE

August 07, 2015

For Immediate Release

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NMED's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

Environment Department Works to Inform Residents and to Obtain Data on Gold King Mine Spill Coursing through the Animas River Contaminated Plume Now in New Mexico

Santa Fe – This morning at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., San Juan County officials along with Cabinet Secretary Ryan Flynn from the State of New Mexico Environment Department and New Mexico State Engineer, Tom Blaine held two informational meetings. San Juan County communities and news media were updated with the most current information on state and local responses, with information on the movement of the sediment and on currently imposed public safety precautions.

“The New Mexico Environment Department is on the ground taking independent water quality samples every six hours at the Animas River at Aztec, at Farmington, and at the San Juan River confluence until Sunday at 9 a.m. The independent data will provide New Mexicans with the information needed to help determine the length of time that the Gold King Mine Spill plume will affect water quality,” said Secretary Flynn. “We believe this information will complement and corroborate the data being obtained by the Environmental Protection Agency.”

The Environment Department is working to arrange for well water testing for affected residents, and is in the process of mobilizing staff and testing equipment. More details will follow as arrangements are finalized.

Releases from the reservoir located on the Navajo Nation are to occur soon and will increase the Animas River flows from 650 cubic feet per second to 1300 cubic feet per second, according to reports from the Environment Department. “Although dilution of the plume will help to diminish its harmful effects, it will not resolve the safety risks still posed. We have issued precautions for water users to guide them safely through this period of time.”

Another meeting with New Mexico State Environment Department Secretary, Ryan Flynn, State Engineer, Tom Blaine as well as San Juan County, City of Farmington, and City of Aztec representatives community leaders, stakeholders, and concerned citizens will be held at 12 noon in Farmington Saturday at the Farmington Civic Center Exhibit Hall, 200 W. Arrington.

Please visit www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org for continuing updates and informational resources associated with the New Mexico Environment Department’s activities to inform and protect communities affected by the EPA’s Gold King Mine Spill of Wednesday August 5, 2015.

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