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NEWS RELEASE*For Immediate Release***Sept. 16, 2020**

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.

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New Mexico official testifies before U.S. Senate on devastating consequences new rule will have on nation's, New Mexico's water

SANTA FE — On Wednesday, Rebecca Roose, Water Protection Division Director of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), testified before the United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on the new Navigable Waters Protection Rule as part of a national discussion on the effects of the rule on the nation's waters.

The rule redefines "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS), which are surface waters that receive protections under the federal Clean Water Act. The new rule, which went into effect on June 22, narrows the definition of WOTUS by excluding certain waters without a scientific justification. NMED estimates that nearly 90% of New Mexico's rivers and streams and a significant portion of wetlands may no longer benefit from federal protections. Without a state regulatory program in place to close the gap, these waters and the communities that rely on them are vulnerable to increased pollution and declining water quality.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before the U.S. Senate on this critical matter," Roose said. "Across the country, people are taking notice that New Mexico is one of the most negatively impacted states when it comes to this federal environmental program rollback. The Environment Department will continue to fight for policies and protections that ensure a clean water supply for drinking water, agriculture, recreation and wildlife."

Roose's testimony, as prepared, is available [here](#). A recording of the hearing is posted [here](#).

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