

Updating the Utility Operators Certification Act

HB 103 provides critical fee increases for the Utility Operators Certification Program to offer innovative computer-based exams and increased flexibility for drinking water and wastewater operators in New Mexico.



About the bill

This bill amends the 1973 Utility Operators Certification Act's fee structure for the first time in 15 years to reflect today's program costs and bring certification and testing into the 21st Century.

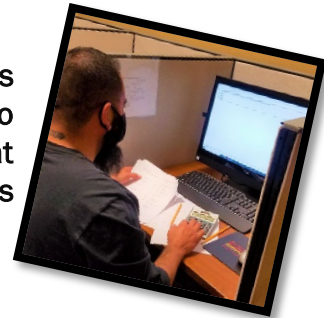
The proposed fees will benefit local utilities and operators by:

- Supporting ongoing availability of innovative computer-based examinations.
- Providing convenient "on demand" certification exams for operators at 22 convenient Workforce Connections Centers throughout New Mexico.
- Delivering more accessible testing opportunities for rural utility operators, cutting travel costs and time away from the job site and their families.

Old way: Paper-based testing at only five locations



New way: HB 103 allows for overdue shift to computer-based testing at 22 locations

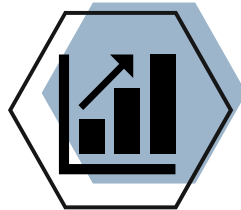


How HB 103 benefits New Mexico



Public Health

- ✓ Supports increased compliance with drinking water and wastewater regulatory requirements at local utilities
- ✓ Promotes more skilled and knowledgeable operators throughout New Mexico



Economy

- ✓ Decreases financial burden on municipal and rural utilities by not requiring operators to travel long distances and wait months for exam sessions
- ✓ Promotes career growth for operators by providing more frequent opportunities for higher level certification exams



Environment

- ✓ Promotes compliance with groundwater and surface water protection standards at sewage treatment plants
- ✓ Cuts emissions and fuel usage by reducing the need for hundreds of operators to travel long distances for exams
- ✓ Reduces paper waste by allowing utility operators to take computer-based exams rather than antiquated paper exams

Sponsors: Rep. Phelps Anderson, Rep. Willie D. Madrid, Sen. Liz Stefanics

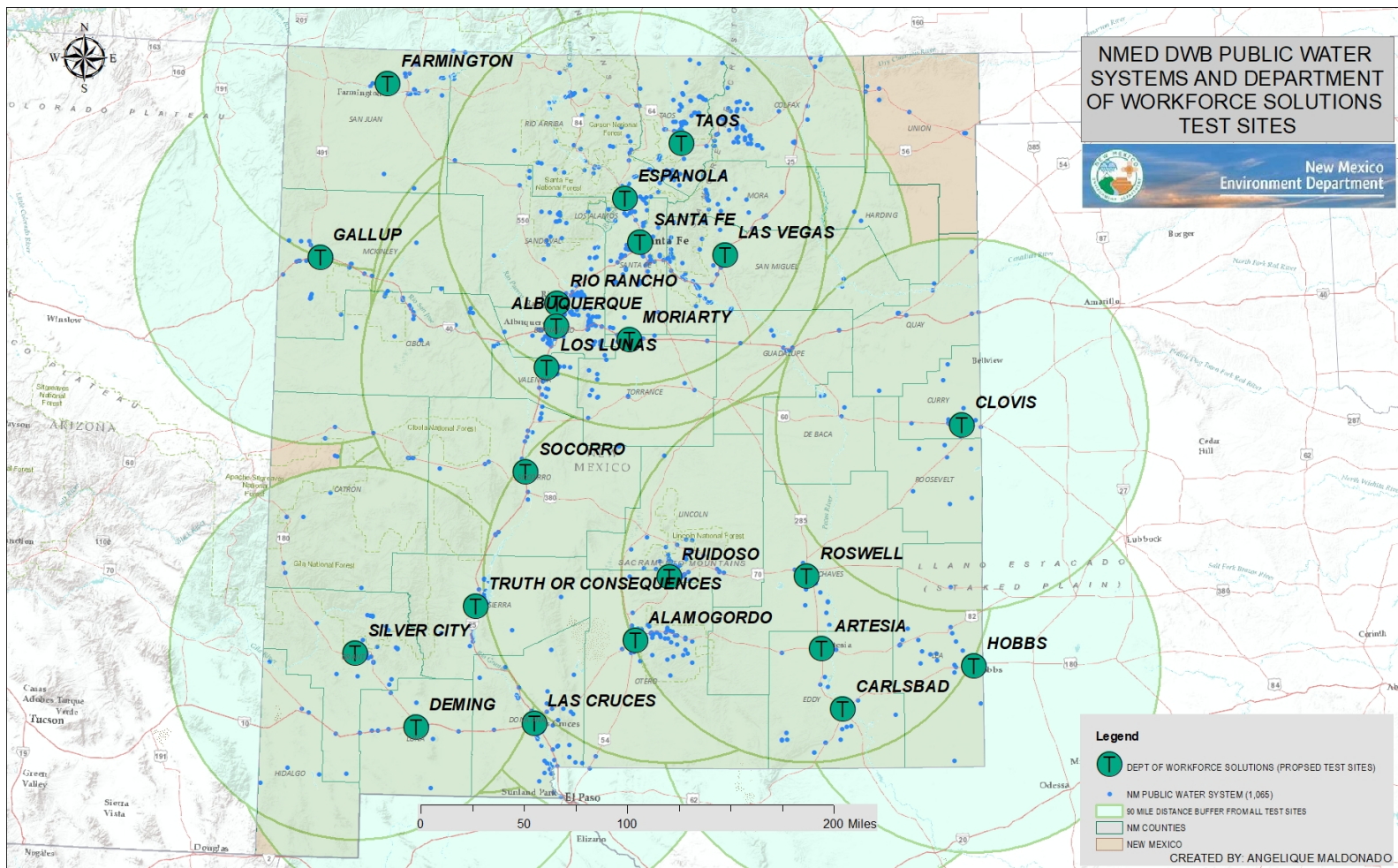


*New Mexico
Utility Operator
Certification
Advisory Board*

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Proximity of Computer Testing Centers to Drinking Water Utilities



NMED has partnered with the Assoc. of Boards of Certification and the NM Dept. of Workforce Solutions to provide computer-based exams at 22 Workforce Connections Centers. Without HB 103, NMED will have to revert to paper-based classroom exams sessions, typically offered periodically throughout the year at five locations in New Mexico, mostly along the I-25 Corridor.

Comparison with Neighboring States' Utility Operator Fees

State	Exam Application Fee	Exam Fees	Renewal Fees (every 3 yrs)	Equivalency (Reciprocity) Fees	Exam Reviews
New Mexico Current	\$0	\$25-\$30	\$20-\$30	\$0	\$0
New Mexico Proposed	\$25	\$60	\$50	\$50	\$25
Arizona	\$0	\$65	\$150-\$300	\$315	\$150
Texas	\$0	\$111	\$111	\$111	N/A
Colorado	\$50	\$100	\$85	\$85	N/A
Utah	\$200	\$150	\$150	\$150	N/A
Oklahoma	\$62	0	\$46	\$62	N/A
Kansas	\$25	\$70	\$25	\$35	N/A
Average of Neighboring States' Fees	\$56	\$83	\$83	\$126	\$150