

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

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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: Kaitlyn O'Brien, Public Relations Specialist
New Mexico Environment Department
505.467.9681 | kaitlyn.o'brien@state.nm.us

Environment Department launches StoryMap providing drought information to public water utilities

In an effort to provide local communities with decision-making tools and resources, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) launched a new StoryMap that provides drought information and resources for water utilities on (date). The StoryMap details current drought impacts and provides sector specific information for resources, emergency funding and planning.

Drought in the Western United States is currently at levels unprecedented in the last 150 years. Called a "mega-drought," increased seasonal temperatures and decreases in both the amount and regularity of precipitation from climate change have and continue to impact the landscape in New Mexico. With serious repercussions for industry, agriculture, municipal utilities and our growing outdoor recreation economy, the current drought emergency is profoundly impacting New Mexicans.

Water is a way of life for New Mexico. Deep traditions reliant on water, like the maintenance of acequias and the annual chile harvest, tie communities together. In this high desert land, "water is life" has tangible meaning. Mitigating the effects of climate change driven drought is essential for continuing our cultural legacy. With a future that includes more frequent and severe periods of drought, resources like this StoryMap are increasingly essential.

This innovative web tool allows public water utilities to access critical drought monitoring and mitigation resources. These resources help water systems provide uninterrupted service to their users. Drought can impact water utilities in several ways. Adequately responding to drought related impacts can substantially lower the cost of drought to the economy and public health.

"The Environment Department is helping local communities increase their resiliency against the effects of drought and human-caused climate change," said Secretary Kenney. "Our drought information StoryMap responds to real-time challenges local leaders face in making informed decisions about their water needs."

The StoryMap uses ArcGIS technology to synthesize current drought information and resources. View the StoryMap [here](#). For more information, contact the NMED Drinking Water Bureau at drinking.water@state.nm.us or call 505-476-8620.

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Kathryn Becker, Non-Discrimination Coordinator | NMED | 1190 St. Francis Dr., Suite N4050 | P.O. Box 5469 | Santa Fe, NM 87502
(505) 827-2855 or nd.coordinator@state.nm.us

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