

**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.

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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signs HB 2, allocating \$10 million to protect New Mexico's rivers & wetlands

Projects to improve water quality, habitats, and resilience to changing climate

Santa Fe — Today, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed HB 2, allocating \$10 million from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to administer the River Stewardship Program. These funds enable the department to reduce dangerous pollutants in New Mexico's life-giving rivers and streams; safeguard water supplies against flooding, drought and climate change by restoring the functionality of wetlands and natural waterways; and protect vital wildlife habitats for endangered species, including the silvery minnow.

"Water is our most precious natural resource and we will continue to make bold investments to protect it for current and future generations of New Mexicans," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "These funds allow local and tribal governments, for-profit organizations, and non-profit organizations to combat the effects of climate change, mitigate the effects of drought and protect our water."

"By investing in our rivers and wetlands, we are making New Mexico less susceptible to climate change impacts and ensuring our watersheds continue to support cultural, economic, and life-sustaining traditions in our state," said NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney. "Today is also an economic win for New Mexicans because this funding creates and supports local jobs in communities through on-the-ground project design and construction."

The department will award funds to eligible projects selected through a request for proposals process in calendar year 2022 and future years. Evaluation criteria ensure that projects are technically sound, community-based and stakeholder driven. Evaluation criteria favor projects that improve water quality, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, support local economies, and that reduce downstream flood hazard. Requests for Proposals for the River Stewardship Program will be available at <https://www.env.nm.gov/requests-for-proposals/>. To learn more about the program, visit <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/river-stewardship-program/>.

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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. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, NMED's

Occupational Health and Safety Bureau kept nearly 9,000 businesses open, 300,000 employees protected and countless New Mexico families safe by conducting more than 30,000 COVID-19 rapid responses.

The agency oversees more than 1,000 public drinking water systems serving nearly all 2 million New Mexicans, in addition to programs that protect our land, air and water.

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