

**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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Environment Department reviewing abatement plan to investigate groundwater contamination from potash mine discharges

Carlsbad — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is reviewing a Stage 1 Abatement Plan (Plan) to investigate and define the extent of groundwater contamination from discharges associated with potash mining.

Groundwater contamination between Laguna Grande and the Pecos River has been detected in groundwater monitoring wells. As a result, NMED required Mosaic Potash Carlsbad to submit the Plan to characterize the nature and extent of groundwater contamination from mine discharges between Laguna Grande and the Pecos River.

Mosaic Potash Carlsbad operates a potash mine located approximately 16 miles east of Carlsbad in Eddy County, New Mexico. The mine includes both an underground potash mine and surface mill that produces potash products including fertilizers used for plant growth and products for animal feed. The mill produces potash tailings that are discharged to an on-site Salt Stack where coarse salt and clay settle. Under normal operating conditions, brine water and residual clay flow off the Salt Stack and discharge to a Clay Settling Pond. The brine water in the Clay Settling Pond is discharged through a brine pipeline to the northern end of Laguna Grande, a naturally occurring salt lake. The brine in Laguna Grande is diverted into a series of evaporation cells operated by United Salt and New Mexico Salt for chloride salt harvesting.

NMED approved the first discharge plan and issued the first Discharge Permit (DP-1399) for Mosaic Potash Carlsbad in 2004, with subsequent renewal in 2011. DP-1399 is currently in effect and addresses all site discharges. DP-1399 is in the process of being renewed pursuant to 20.6.2.3108 and 3109 NMAC. For more information on the permit renewal for Mosaic Potash Carlsbad, visit <https://www.env.nm.gov/public-notice> and click on Eddy County.

The Plan includes a summary of site conditions, including site history and previously conducted investigations, and proposes steps to define the nature and extent of groundwater contamination. NMED will review the Plan pursuant to 20.6.2.4106(C) NMAC and either approve the Plan or send Mosaic Potash Carlsbad a Notification of Deficiency within 60 days.

Once Mosaic Potash Carlsbad completes the site characterization and NMED approves the Final Site Characterization Report, NMED may require a Stage 2 Abatement Plan that outlines strategies to clean up the groundwater contamination.

View the abatement plan at <https://www.env.nm.gov/gwqb/public-notice>. For more information, contact Anne Maurer, Mining Act Team Leader at (505) 660-8878 or Anne.maurer@state.nm.us. NMED is providing this notice of receipt of the Stage 1 Abatement Plan pursuant to 20.6.2.4108(A) NMAC of the New Mexico Ground and Surface Water Protection Regulations (20.6.2 NMAC).

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