



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

December 7, 2022

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: Matthew Maez, Communications Director
New Mexico Environment Department
505.670.8911 | matthew.maez@env.nm.gov

Environment Department releases quarterly performance report highlighting accomplishments, resource challenges

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) released the first-quarter update of its fiscal year 2023 (FY23) performance assessment report that offers the public, stakeholders, and legislators the opportunity to track the department's progress in protecting public health and the environment. The report also provides insights on budget and staffing challenges impacting performance.

Accomplishments highlighted in the report include NMED's role in this year's wildfire response, including providing guidance to acequias and technical assistance to the City of Las Vegas water utility, leading fire and flood debris removal efforts, conducting post-fire water quality sampling, and offering free private well water testing to impacted communities. The report also notes the launch of the Air Quality Bureau's ePermitting Portal, the awarding of \$7.3 million in Volkswagen Settlement funds, and favorable public health outcomes including 97% of New Mexicans breathing clean air and 89% of New Mexicans drinking clean water. Water infrastructure projects saw \$10.9 million in investments in the first quarter of FY23, more than in any quarter of the previous fiscal year.

In FY23, NMED received appropriations totaling \$114.0 million to protect public health and the environment. This included \$20.3 million in general funds, \$57.4 million in special revenue funds (e.g., permit fees), \$36.3 million in federal funds, and \$1.9 million in special appropriations for earmarked projects/purposes.

The first quarter report, developed by NMED's Office of Strategic Initiatives, covers the period from July 1, 2022, through September 30, 2022. The first quarter report is the initial installment in reporting on 46 performance measures over five broad categories for FY23 as follows:

- 6 public health measures,
- 9 environmental protection measures,
- 24 compliance measures,
- 4 economic investment measures, and
- 3 operational measures.

The report also provides a retrospective look at the first quarter while providing insights for the rest of the fiscal year.

“The launch of the Climate Change and Cannabis and Hemp Bureaus is a big step forward for New Mexico,” said **NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney**. “These Bureaus will support our nationally-leading efforts to grow a clean energy economy and foster a safe cannabis industry.”

While the 46 performance measures largely stem from agreements between NMED and the Legislative Finance Committee for state fiscal year 2023, the NMED uses these reports to provide other information to the public, stakeholders and legislature.

Highlights from the first quarterly report of FY23 include:

- 97% of New Mexicans breathed clean air.
- 89% of New Mexicans drank safe drinking water.
- 31 new water infrastructure projects were initiated through NMED across the state disbursing almost \$11 million dollars into communities with water infrastructure needs.
- NMED staff conducted 2,013 compliance inspections across the state.
- For inspections conducted during the first quarter of FY23, five programs found compliance exceeding the benchmark compliance of 85% while three regulatory program areas fell below the target:
 - Solid and infectious waste management facilities: 100% in compliance
 - Surface water discharge permittees: 100% in compliance
 - Liquid waste program (i.e., septic systems): 99.6% in compliance
 - Groundwater discharge permittees: 96.3% in compliance
 - Radiation licensing program (i.e., medical equipment): 94% in compliance
 - Restaurants and food manufacturers: 69.7% in compliance
 - Air emitting sources: 53.3% in compliance
 - Hazardous waste management facilities: 36.8% in compliance
- NMED Drinking Water Bureau staff provided direct technical assistance to 28 community water systems to help them move from a status of non-compliance to compliance.
- The report includes a new “NMED Staff Workload Snapshot” and supporting data in Appendix A that provide insight into the workload challenges facing an under-resourced agency. For example, at current staffing levels it would take it would take NMED air quality inspectors 6.5 years to visit all currently permitted air emitting sources across the state.
- NMED’s vacancy rate during this period was approximately 21.7%.
- Exit interview data shows employees leave NMED for private/public sector opportunities with greater compensation; greater earning potential for less complex work at other state agencies; frustration over lack of compensation related to the volume, pace, and complexity of work; and retirements.
- At the end of the previous fiscal year, NMED instituted a variety of retention incentives to retain employees and implemented a hiring pilot program, which was recognized in the Legislative Finance Committee’s August 17 report on [State Personnel Compensation and Classification Plan Human Resources Authority](#).

View the FY23 Q1 Performance Assessment [here](#).

NMED does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age or sex in the administration of its programs or activities, as required by applicable laws and regulations. NMED is responsible for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning non-discrimination requirements implemented by 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972. If you have any questions about this notice or any of NMED's non-discrimination programs, policies or procedures, you may contact: Kathryn Becker, Non-Discrimination Coordinator | NMED | 1190 St. Francis Dr., Suite N4050 | P.O. Box 5469 | Santa Fe, NM 87502 or (505) 827-2855 or nd.coordinator@env.nm.gov. If you believe that you have been discriminated against with respect to a NMED program or activity, you may contact the Non-Discrimination Coordinator.

###