

**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 releases quarterly performance and year-end report highlighting accomplishments, community investments**

**SANTA FE** — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) released the fourth-quarter and year-end 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 between April 1 and June 30, 2023. The report also provides insights on budget and staffing challenges impacting performance and provides year-end totals for FY23 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023).

Fourth quarter accomplishments highlighted in the report include:

- Exceeding all economic development targets: awarding \$138.7M in FY23 to New Mexico communities, more than double the department's target of \$65M; cleaning up 645 acres of contaminated land through the brownfields program; investing over \$50M in water infrastructure projects; and initiating 157 new water infrastructure projects, twice the department's target of 75 new projects.
- Applying for and receiving a \$3M Climate Pollution Reduction Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to support ongoing Climate Change Task Force planning to reduce greenhouse gases in New Mexico.
- Negotiating a settlement agreement for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant renewal permit, saving taxpayers significant costs by avoiding a costly hearing process.
- Awarding \$465,000 to Goodwill Industries from the Diesel Emission Reduction Act Program to replace older diesel engines with electric engines that do not produce any tailpipe emissions.
- Issuing a \$40M fine against oil and gas producer Ameredev for egregious violations of state rules and permitting requirements.

Among the accomplishments for FY23, NMED completed 9,270 compliance inspections, cleaned up 645 brownfield acres which are now available for reuse, and administered \$138.7 million for community projects throughout the state.

"We are proud of NMED staff who work extremely hard every day to protect New Mexicans from threats to public and environmental health," said **Office of Strategic Initiatives Director Jonas**

**Armstrong.** “Our quarterly and year-end performance reports show the impact of the Department’s efforts, the enormous workload we face, and where additional resources are needed for us to do more.”

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 report, developed by NMED’s Office of Strategic Initiatives reports 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.

Despite resource shortages, and each technical staff person overseeing 140 projects, our Construction Programs Bureau initiated 8 new water infrastructure projects across the state in the fourth quarter, disbursing almost \$16.5 million into communities with water infrastructure needs.

The 46 performance measures largely stem from agreements between NMED and the Department of Finance and Administration and the Legislative Finance Committee for state fiscal year 2023 pursuant to the Accountability in Government Act. NMED uses these reports to provide additional context and information to the public and the legislature.

Highlights from the report indicate:

- 98.9% of New Mexicans breathed clean air.
- 89.9% of New Mexicans drank safe drinking water.
- NMED staff conducted 2,861 compliance inspections across the state.
- For the inspections conducted, three programs found compliance exceeding the benchmark compliance of 85% while five regulatory program areas fell below the target:
  - Groundwater discharge permittees: 97.7% in compliance
  - Liquid waste program (i.e., septic systems): 97.7% in compliance
  - Radiation licensing program (i.e., medical equipment): 95.7% in compliance
  - Surface water discharge permittees: 79.3% in compliance
  - Solid and infectious waste management facilities: 75.0% in compliance.
  - Restaurants and food manufacturers: 70.2% in compliance
  - Air emitting sources: 50.0% in compliance
  - Hazardous waste management facilities: 25.5% in compliance
- NMED Drinking Water Bureau staff provided direct technical assistance to 89 community water systems to help them move from a status of non-compliance to compliance.

The report includes an “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, each NMED Occupational Health and Safety inspector has an average of 6,804 facilities to regulate. If each one inspected a facility every workday, it would take this team 29 years to visit each site.

NMED’s vacancy rate during this period was approximately 17.87% compared to 18.03% in the last quarter. Based on exit interview data and the Department’s annual employee engagement surveys,

NMED's vacancies are driven by opportunities for greater compensation with less complex work and retirements.

View the FY23 Q4 Performance Assessment [here](#).

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