



# New Mexico State Senate

STATE CAPITOL

Santa Fe 87501

August 16, 2023

The Honorable James C. Kenney  
Secretary, New Mexico Environment Department  
1190 St. Francis Drive, Suite N4050  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

*Sent via electronic mail only*

Dear Secretary Kenney:

It has come to our attention that the New Mexico Environment Department (“NMED”) publicly announced its plans to permanently close the Deming field office on September 30, 2023. According to the official press release, the decision was “necessitated by operating budget constraints” and a “lack of appropriate funding for building leases.”

As noted in the press release, the Deming field office has served as the primary hub for almost 400 regulated entities in southern New Mexico including restaurants, public pools, spas, and septic services. Our understanding is that the office is already backlogged and we are greatly concerned about the impact this closure will have on those entities. Legislative staff has informed us that this action is an effort by NMED to mitigate future reductions in federal funding for indirect uses. Unfortunately, though it may benefit NMED’s future funding, the negative effects of the closure will be felt by our constituents immediately.

During the 2023 Legislative Session, the Senate Finance Committee amended the budget to increase NMED’s general fund appropriation by a whopping 13.5 percent, which exceeded the executive’s recommendation. Our state agencies, including NMED, are now being funded at record-high levels, making it difficult for us to explain and justify the closure of this important office to our constituents and local businesses.

The 2024 Legislative Session is just five months away and we welcome the opportunity to work with you on a solution to address NMED’s funding constraints. In the meantime, we strongly urge you and the Governor to reconsider this premature action.

Your prompt consideration regarding this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Crystal Diamond Brantley in black ink.

CRYSTAL DIAMOND BRANTLEY  
State Senator

Handwritten signature of Siah Correa Hemphill in black ink.

SIAH CORREA HEMPHILL  
State Senator

Cc: Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Senator George K. Muñoz, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
Representative Nathan Small, Chairman, House Appropriations and Finance Committee  
Mr. Charles Sallee, Interim Director, Legislative Finance Committee