

**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 issues update on drinking water from Camino Real Regional Utility Authority**

*pH levels are dropping, department investigating cause and long-term impacts of incident*

**DOÑA ANA COUNTY** — The New Mexico Environment Department's Drinking Water Bureau (DWB) provided an update on the status of drinking water from the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA) in Doña Ana County. A "Do Not Drink" order was confirmed by DWB on Friday, December 1. Per CRRUA, as of today, the system has returned to normal operations except for the Industrial Park area.

CRRUA informed the Environment Department that elevated pH levels were detected in the water system's distribution system on the afternoon of December 1, 2023, after DWB staff began receiving reports from residents of "slimy" area tap water. Slimy feeling water can be a sign of high-water pH. On Monday, staff from DWB were onsite at CRRUA to begin confirming the pH results from the system.

Over the weekend, DWB staff were on-site at CRRUA facilities to conduct a preliminary investigation into the cause and assist with efforts to address the problem. According to CRRUA data, pH levels in most neighborhoods fell to between 8.0 and 9.6 in various parts of their system as of December 3, 2023. Additionally, according to information provided by CRRUA, normal operating level of pH for their system range from approximately 7.9 to 8.5, a level considered to be safe according to National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations (NSDWRs). DWB staff have begun independently testing water in the CRRUA system and have verified that water levels are slowly returning to levels within acceptable ranges. On Monday, December 4, DWB staff measured pH at ranges between 7.9 and 9.5 at various points throughout the system, with the highest pH reading measured in the Industrial Park area.

DWB will continue to have staff onsite verifying pH levels, provide oversight, and to offer technical assistance. DWB will also require CRRUA to continue to test the water until no further threat of contamination remains, as well as exercising regulatory authority requiring the system to investigate any potential long-term damage to water infrastructure in the area.

NMED's Surface Water Quality Bureau and Ground Water Quality Bureau are also investigating the incident to determine if any violations of Water Quality Regulations occurred as a result of this incident.

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