



## **NEWS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

**March 15, 2024**

*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 to offer free domestic water well tests at the Sierra County Rock and Gem Show**

*Up to 100 residents can get well water tested for free at Truth of Consequences event*

**TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES** – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the Department of Health (DOH) is hosting a free domestic well water testing event at the Sierra County Rock and Gem Show in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico on March 23, 2024.

Free testing will be available 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 23, 2024 at the Sierra County Rock and Gem Show held at the Sierra County Fair Grounds in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. Parking and admission to the event is FREE for all.

Well water tests typically cost about \$150 but will be free to the first 100 participants or while supplies last. Test results will be mailed to the households following the event.

“Residents who rely on private water wells may have questions about their water quality,” said **Ground Water Quality Bureau Chief Justin Ball**. “This water fair provides residents in Sierra County easy and affordable access to information about the quality of their private well water that they would otherwise need to pay for.”

To have water tested, residents need to bring a sample of their water to the event. Use these guidelines to ensure the sample is collected correctly:

- Let the water run for 2-3 minutes before collecting the sample.
- Fill a clean glass or plastic container without any odors with at least a quart or liter of your well water.
- If the home has a whole house filtration system, collect the water at the well head prior to any filtration or softener systems if possible.
- Fill the container with water as close to the time of testing as possible.

Along with the water sample, residents should bring basic information known about the well such as well depth, depth to water, well casing material (i.e., steel, PVC), well latitude and longitude and distance from the well to the nearest septic tank or leachfield system.

If well owners are unable to attend the event but would like to have their water tested, they may have a sample brought to the event by a family member or neighbor, provided the bottle is clearly labeled and has the owner's name, phone number, address and well information attached. Only water that comes from homes that rely on private wells for drinking water will be tested.

The state's "water fairs" provide an opportunity for well owners to measure pH, specific conductance and levels of nitrates in their water. These constituents may be naturally occurring or result from sources including fertilizer, animal waste and septic tanks. Drinking water with high levels of nitrate can be dangerous to pregnant women and infants. Other contaminants may lead to other health problems and aesthetic nuisances. [Learn more about the water fair program.](#)

While the state's Environment department conducts water fairs to help educate private well owners about drinking water and well maintenance, these state agencies do not have jurisdiction over private wells.

Since July 1, 2023, NMED tested 71 private drinking water wells over 5 water fairs providing \$10,650 in value to communities in New Mexico. NMED tracks its investments in communities as part of its performance measures and targeted [investing \\$65 million](#) throughout the state in fiscal year 2024.

Water from public water systems (i.e., local water utilities) is tested periodically and results are available on the [Drinking Water Watch website](#).

For more information about upcoming water fairs, please visit [NMED's event calendar](#) or contact the Environment Department at 505-827- 2900.

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