



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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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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New Camino Real Regional Utility Authority arsenic sampling results meet EPA drinking water standards

DOÑA ANA COUNTY – On April 4, 2024, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau (DWB) conducted additional arsenic compliance sampling at the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA) in Doña Ana County. Those results from the laboratory confirm all four of the drinking water samples analyzed were below the federal drinking water Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 0.010 mg/L.

These samples were part of a routine compliance sampling plan that was conducted at CRRUA as part of federal and state drinking water regulations. The compliance sample results are included below:

Sample Location	Sample Result (mg/L)	Arsenic MCL 0.010 (mg/L)
Industrial Park Arsenic Treatment Plant	0.007	Below MCL
Border Tank (Santa Teresa Border Crossing)	0.003	Below MCL
Sunland Park Arsenic Treatment Plant	0.005	Below MCL
Santa Teresa Arsenic Treatment Plant	0.006	Below MCL

On March 28, 2024, NMED announced the results from special, unannounced arsenic sampling at CRRUA in Doña Ana County. At that time, one sample collected from the Industrial Park area of their distribution system had levels above the arsenic drinking standard. This latest round of sampling indicates that the arsenic treatment systems are operating as intended and are currently providing drinking water that meets the federal and state standards for arsenic.

While this is an important step in providing compliant drinking water, NMED will continue to hold CRRUA accountable and ensure that they maintain long term compliance and provide drinking water that meets all regulatory standards.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set the arsenic standard for drinking water at 0.010 mg/L to protect consumers from the effects of long-term, chronic exposure to arsenic. Public drinking water systems, like CRRUA, were obligated to comply with the current arsenic drinking water standard level as of January 23, 2006 – over 18 years ago.

On March 1, 2024, [NMED issued CRRUA an administrative order](#) that included \$251,580 in penalties for continued violations of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and New Mexico Drinking Water

Regulations. While CRRUA has appealed NMED's administrative order, the Department will vigorously defend its action to hold CRRUA accountable for any and all violations.

In addition, NMED began additional investigations into CRRUA's operations through a [March 27, 2024 information demand letter](#). The investigation focuses on CRRUA's management of the arsenic treatment systems by seeking records related to sampling data, internal communications, financial and other information. CRRUA has 21 days to provide NMED with this information of face civil or criminal sanctions. This investigation will inform additional actions the Department may take against CRRUA.

On March 14, 2024, [NMED alerted the New Mexico Department of Justice and the New Mexico Office of the State Auditor](#) to the ongoing compliance issues at CRRUA. NMED sought their assistance in investigating CRRUA for any potential violations of consumer protection laws and possible waste, fraud, and abuse of state and federal funds, respectively. CRRUA has received more than \$13.6M in state loans and grants for water and wastewater projects from the since 2012.

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