

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

NEWS RELEASE **For Immediate Release**

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.

February 11, 2026

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CRRUA to pay nearly \$200k for drinking water violations Settlement is first of two cases holding utility accountable

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department today announced a settlement with the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority of five violations committed by the utility since 2023.

The settlement includes a penalty of \$189,000, including a “bad faith” enhancement due to CRRUA’s repeated lack of accountability during the enforcement process. The funds will be deposited into the State’s Water Conservation Fund, which supports required water quality sampling and operator training assistance for public water systems statewide.

“The Environment Department has for years worked to hold CRRUA accountable for repeatedly failing its duty to deliver safe and reliable drinking water to the residents of Sunland Park,” said **Bruce Baizel, Director of NMED’s Compliance and Enforcement Division**. “The settlement announced today is a significant first step. We are still pursuing a court-appointed independent manager to oversee operations going forward.”

Today’s settlement addresses five Notices of Violation issued to CRRUA between 2020 and 2024, including:

- Exceedance of federal Safe Drinking Water Act arsenic limits
- Failure to notify customers of high pH levels and take appropriate action to protect them
- Failure to correct deficiencies found in multiple sanitary surveys of CRRUA’s operations

CRRUA has met water quality standards in the past 12 months, but the system has several outstanding administrative reporting violations.

In addition to today’s settlement, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is still seeking a court-appointed independent manager to oversee operations, as well as:

- Implement real-time arsenic monitoring
- Distribute free arsenic test strips for all CRRUA customers
- Provide an alternative drinking water source if arsenic levels exceed state limits
- Conduct monthly public meetings

A full copy of the settlement [can be found here](#).

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