STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Environment Department

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR
James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

NEWS 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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NMED convenes advisory committee on groundwater permit fees

Proposed changes would better align fees with program costs

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Environment Department is convening a stakeholder advisory committee to gather input on proposed changes to groundwater discharge permit fees, with its first meeting scheduled for Dec. 9 in Albuquerque.

NMED petitioned the Water Quality Control Commission on Oct. 13 to update the fee structure, which currently covers less than 10% of the cost of administering the state's groundwater discharge permitting program. The remaining costs are funded by taxpayers.

"This update aligns permit fees with the actual cost of administering the groundwater discharge program," said **Environment Secretary James Kenney**. "It corrects a long-standing taxpayer subsidy and ensures the program is funded by the activity it regulates."

Groundwater discharge permits are required for facilities that discharge wastewater or other fluids that may affect groundwater quality. Administering the program requires technical engineering reviews of complex permit applications, on-site inspections, groundwater monitoring, compliance evaluations, data management and assistance to permit holders.

The proposed changes would better align permit fees with the costs of these existing responsibilities without expanding NMED's regulatory authority. Under state law, revenue collected through groundwater discharge permit fees can only be used to support the groundwater protection program.

"Updating the fee structure will help ensure timely permit review, consistent inspections, and reliable compliance oversight," said **Water Protection Division Director Jonas Armstrong**. "These are the core functions permit holders rely on and the public expects and deserves."

The first meeting of the Fees Advisory Committee will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, at NMED's Albuquerque office, 5401 Watson Drive SE, in the Piñon Pine Room (Room 201). The meeting will be held in-person, with an option to participate virtually.

A second meeting is tentatively scheduled for the third week of January 2027 at the Harold Runnels Building in Santa Fe. Both meetings will provide stakeholders an opportunity to review and discuss the proposed fee changes. NMED anticipates concluding the advisory committee process in early 2027.

Virtual participation information will be available through NMED's online calendar. Questions about meeting logistics can be directed to gwdpfees.general@env.nm.gov. Comments on the proposed regulations can be submitted through Ground Water Quality Bureau Discharge Permit Fee Adjustment.

The WQCC has not yet scheduled a rulemaking hearing, which is expected to take place in 2027. NMED will accept public comments during the advisory committee process, with additional opportunities for public participation during the formal rulemaking proceeding.

Additional information, including a copy of NMED's petition, is available on the department's website.

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