

For Immediate Release

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State launching statewide produced water outreach efforts

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) will host a series of public outreach meetings across the state to engage the public on the topic of treating produced water for use outside the oil and gas industry.

NMED will host the meetings along with representatives from the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) and the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) to provide stakeholders with information on produced water and the upcoming rulemaking process. The public engagement process will provide opportunities for stakeholders to share input with state officials on the range of critical environmental, natural resource and human health considerations involved in the implementation of the Produced Water Act.

“Our goal is to create regulations that are protective of human health and the environment, reduce industry reliance on fresh water and encourage science-based and innovative solutions,” said NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney. “To that end, we are including a diverse group of voices from the beginning to ensure these future regulations are done right.”

Meetings are scheduled for:

| Date | Location |
|---------------------|--|
| 6-8:30 p.m. Oct. 15 | National Hispanic Cultural Center Grand Hall 1701 4 th St. SW Albuquerque, NM 87102 |
| 6-8:30 p.m. Oct. 30 | St. Francis Auditorium 331 Sandoval St. Santa Fe, NM 87501 |
| 6-8:30 p.m. Nov. 14 | Pecos River Village Conference Center 711 Muscatel Ave. Carlsbad, NM 88220 |
| 6-8:30 p.m. Nov. 19 | San Juan College Little Theatre 4601 College Blvd. Farmington, NM 87402 |
| 6-8:30 p.m. Nov. 25 | New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum 4100 Dripping Springs Rd. Las Cruces, NM 88011 |

The agenda for each meeting is as follows:

- 6-6:45 p.m.: Presentation by senior officials from NMED, EMNRD and OSE on Produced Water Act provisions, roles of each state agency, NMED's public engagement and rulemaking process, and science and technology for produced water treatment and use outside the oil and gas sector.
- 6:45-8:30 p.m.: Question-and-answer session and public input on management and treatment of produced water.

Produced water is defined in the Produced Water Act as "fluid that is an incidental byproduct from drilling for or the production of oil and gas." Most produced water is naturally occurring, highly saline water that is recovered during oil and gas production. Produced water may also include fluids that were used during drilling, such as hydraulic fracturing fluids. Over 42 billion gallons of produced water were generated in New Mexico's Permian Basin in 2018 alone.

"With the volume of produced water that is produced and disposed of each year, it is important to encourage the treatment and reuse of the water over disposal, which has been shown to have unintended consequences," said EMNRD Oil Conservation Division Director Adrienne Sandoval. "This is an important effort that NMED and EMNRD look forward to tackling."

These meetings are being held ahead of a formal NMED rulemaking process that will lead to regulations over the reuse and treatment of produced water outside of the oil and gas industry, as stipulated in the Produced Water Act. NMED has not set a timeline by which formal rulemaking will commence. Any regulations that are drafted must go through a formal rulemaking process before the state's Water Quality Control Commission, including the opportunity for the public to comment.

Learn more about NMED's work on produced water and sign up for updates, visit <https://www.env.nm.gov/new-mexico-produced-water/>.

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