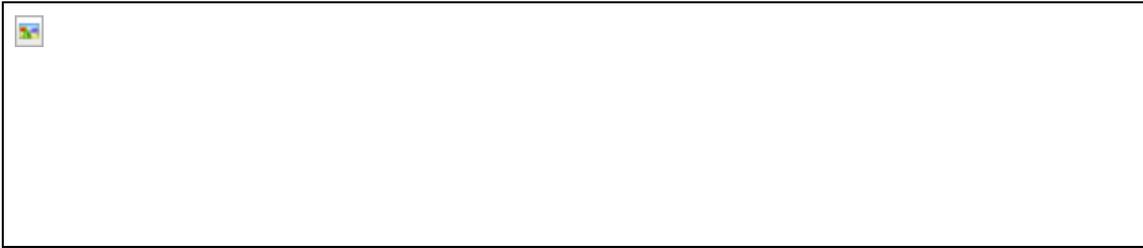


From: Bardino, Marissa, NMENV
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2009 2:56 PM
Subject: FW: Office of Natural Resources Trustee Resoring Nitrate Contaminated Groundwater



June 30, 2009
For Immediate Release

Contact: Jim Baca, Trustee
(505) 243-8087

Office of Natural Resources Trustee Restoring Nitrate Contaminated Groundwater

(Albuquerque, NM) – Governor Bill Richardson and Natural Resource Trustee Jim Baca announced that cleanup of nitrate-polluted groundwater in the South Valley is underway. The polluted groundwater is located in Albuquerque’s South Valley east of the Rio Grande near the mouth of the Tijeras Arroyo. This is a site of historical nitrate contamination for which no other sources of funding for restoration were available. The contamination was first discovered in 1961 and is thought to have been caused by over-fertilization of a farm. Ingesting nitrate contaminated water can cause methemoglobinemia (blue baby syndrome). The plume occupies a volume of approximately one square mile.

The New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee is responsible for restoring natural resources that are injured due to releases of hazardous substances or oil. Natural resource restoration is paid for by funds recovered from parties responsible for the injury, not taxpayer dollars. The Office of Natural Resources Trustee is funding this restoration project from a \$4.8 million settlement from corporations involved in the South Valley Superfund site.

“Every day we are reminded how precious our groundwater resources are to future generations of New Mexicans,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “This project will make available clean water resources in Albuquerque’s South Valley.”

The Office of Natural Resources Trustee is funding the New Mexico Environment Department to oversee the project contractors. The first phase of the project, an evaluation of the groundwater contamination, is underway. The evaluation is necessary to determine the appropriate groundwater treatment for the contaminated water and is expected to be completed this summer. The second phase is the restoration of the groundwater, and, if necessary, soil cleanup. The restoration work will begin this winter. The goal of the project is to return the groundwater in the aquifer to usable conditions.

“We know that as our climate warms that water becomes more and more precious for the future of the western states,” said Natural Resources Trustee Jim Baca. “We will continue to protect and restore our groundwater resources with diligence.”

For more information, call Jim Baca at (505) 243-8087.

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