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DISCUSSION DRAFT
July 12, 2024

6/24/2024

{TO HEADING}

Subject: Support for the Budget Request, Neglected Contamination Sites, Fiscal Year 2025

Dear {Elected Official}:

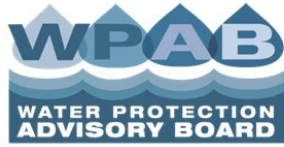
The Water Protection Advisory Board (WPAB) was established through ordinance by the Albuquerque City Council, the Bernalillo County Board of County Commissioners, and the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority Governing Board to advise and make recommendations regarding protection of groundwater and surface water resources throughout the Bernalillo County area.

The WPAB hereby recommends long term financial support for the New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Neglected Contamination Sites Project, beginning with the fiscal year 2026 budget. Over 300 neglected contamination sites, including more than 50 sites in Bernalillo County, have negatively ~~impact~~impacted water quality throughout New Mexico, ~~including Bernalillo County~~, and typically do not have a responsible party or other options for contaminant clean up. These contamination sites have directly affected New Mexicans' health, property values and resale, development, economic growth, and well-being in the affected communities. In addition, many of these neglected contamination sites are located in disadvantaged areas where environmental justice is lacking.

WPAB previously requested support for the Neglected Contamination Sites Project in November 2022 and continues to request long-term financial support for this project, possibly in the form of a permanent, recurring fund to ~~pay for~~ initiate and continue the necessary analysis, cleanup and remediation efforts. Establishment of this fund may require an amendment to the NM Water Quality Act [§74-6-1 et. seq. NMSA 2021]. In addition, WPAB advocates for the State Agencies responsible for New Mexico's water quality to have their budgets approved at the highest level to effectively protect the State's water resources. Approval to these State Agencies' budgets will result in improved protection of water resources for New Mexico citizens including those in the WPAB area of concern. We therefore encourage our constituent agencies to advocate at state and local levels to ensure funding for these crucial programs.

Respectfully,

Bart Faris, Chair



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Water Protection Advisory Board

Cc: Councilor Louie Sanchez, District 1
 Councilor Joaquin Baca, District 2
 Councilor Klarissa Peña, District 3
 Councilor Brook Bassan, District 4
 Councilor Dan Lewis, District 5
 Councilor Nichole Rogers, District 6
 Councilor Tammy Fiebelkorn, District 7
 Councilor Dan Champine, District 8
 Councilor Renée Grout, District 9
 Commissioner Barbara Baca, District 1
 Commissioner Steven Michael Quezada, District 2
 Commissioner Adriann Barboa, District 3
 Commissioner Walt Benson, District 4
 Commissioner Eric Olivas, District 5
 Mayor Timothy Keller, City of Albuquerque
 Mark Sanchez, Executive Director, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
 Julie Morgas Baca, County Manager, Bernalillo County