

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

NEWS RELEASE*For Immediate Release***Feb. 22, 2024**

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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**Environment Department provides update on PFAS
contamination near the Santa Fe Airport***Responsible party not yet identified*

Note: This is a correction to a Feb. 22, 2024 news release that incorrectly identified Santa Fe County as the lead agency on fire response at the Santa Fe Airport. The City of Santa Fe's Fire Department is the lead response agency for fire response at the Santa Fe Airport. Thank you to Santa Fe County Manager Gregory S. Shaffer for providing this information to the department. We apologize for the error.

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) continues to work to identify the responsible party or parties associated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination around the Santa Fe Airport. Potential sources of the contamination include the Army National Guard's use of PFAS-containing Aqueous Film Forming Foam at the site until the early 2000's, the City of Santa Fe's wastewater treatment solids disposal area, and the City of Santa Fe Fire Department's fire response at the regional airport.

In 2019, the Army National Guard informed NMED that it was beginning preliminary site assessment at the Army Aviation Support Facility adjacent to the Santa Fe Airport. NMED was involved in reviewing sampling locations and sampling methodology as the site assessment plan was developed by the Army National Guard. NMED received the final site investigation report in October of 2023, and is finalizing its review of the 22,000+ page report. NMED is evaluating the sampling data from the site investigation performed by the Army National Guard and coordinating with the Army National Guard as they move forward with further site investigation to identify the nature and extent of the PFAS contamination.

NMED is currently awaiting groundwater sampling data from the City of Santa Fe's monitoring wells around the wastewater treatment solids disposal areas adjacent to the airport. NMED expects the City of Santa Fe to provide sampling data results to the department by Feb. 29, 2024. The data will assist NMED in determining if the solids disposal area may be contributing to the contamination.

Under New Mexico's Hazardous Waste Act and Water Quality Act, it is illegal to release PFAS into the environment. As a result of the contamination, NMED anticipates issuing enforcement actions, including investigation and clean-up orders, to the responsible parties to require clean-up of the PFAS contamination at the source and other impacted areas once defined.

PFAS are a group of 15,000 or more synthetic chemicals used in a variety of products, including food packaging, nonstick cookware, and certain types of fire-fighting materials. PFAS were used in fire-fighting foam at Air Force bases and airports across the United States. PFAS are known as "forever" chemicals because they do not easily degrade in the environment due to their chemical properties. Thus,

PFAS can build up over time in soil, water, and living organisms and are found in water sources around the world. Growing evidence suggests exposure to some PFAS chemicals can lead to adverse health effects including increased cholesterol, reproductive problems, and cancer.

In 2023, the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed regulations](#) to establish legally enforceable levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for six PFAS in drinking water.

Additional information about PFAS is available [here](#).

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