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Speech text:

This report presents an opportunity for us to DO something to address the public health crisis that the fracking industry is inflicting on us *right now* in New Mexico.

The title says it all: New Mexico Oil and Gas Waste Report - The FAILURE to Safely Manage Oil and Gas Waste.

Since Michelle Lujan Grisham took office, New Mexico has gone from the 5th to the Second biggest oil and gas producing state in the nation. We now host the WORLD'S largest and cheapest oil field in southeast NM.

Once again, New Mexico is at the top of all of the worst lists, and the bottom of all the best.

Why do our decision makers continue to allow our state to be sacrificed as a toxic waste dump?

One New Mexico frack well uses an average of [12 million gallons of precious fresh water](#) during the multi-stage fracking process, turning that water into "produced water" in the process, creating [5-7 times more waste](#) than oil and gas.

This waste contains contaminants that cannot be removed, including radioactive materials, heavy metals, and extreme salts. [And as oil and gas extraction has boomed in New Mexico, the fracking industry has faced rising costs and difficulties in disposing of this waste.](#) But rather than slow or even stop production, industry has called on the Trump Administration and the Michelle Lujan Grisham Administration to simply reclassify their waste as "not toxic" and call it "water." It's no secret - the industry's strategy is to re-label their waste so they can more cheaply dump it into rivers, onto crops, and into drinking water supplies.

But this dumping is *already happening*. And it's already a problem for New Mexicans and public health.

This report is conservative. It uses industry's *self reported* data. And so, with conservative estimates, we know at least **1.4 million gallons of toxic fracking waste has spilled in the first eight months of 2020 alone. We know, at best,** only 40% of contaminants that were spilled into the environment were recovered.

Climate change is ravaging New Mexico, leading to more severe droughts and water shortages. In response, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham is endorsing the use of the oil and gas industry's toxic wastewater to replenish drinking water supplies, irrigate

crops, and fill rivers. Her policy position is an extremely reckless approach to regulating the fossil fuel industry and stands to leave New Mexico's diminishing water supplies poisoned and unusable.

Governor Lujan Grisham has said that [dumping fracking industry waste onto farms, into streams, and into drinking water supplies, would be "Good for New Mexico."](#)

You know what would be good for New Mexico? Actually protecting New Mexicans from a tsunami toxic spills of frack waste.

We know there is at least one "major" spill each day with an average of three "minor" waste incidents daily.

These "minor" incidents are what woke up Penny Aucoin and her family at 2 AM this January, as toxic oil and gas waste rained from the sky, showering their home and killing their animals, and rendering their land unusable for growing food. We still remember the explosion of frack waste in July 2016 that burned in a fire for five days and forced 55 Greater Chaco residents to never return home.

But these, spills, leaks, and explosions are just business as usual for the fracking industry.

And meanwhile, sacred landscapes are despoiled with reckless abandon, our Land of Enchantment is sick, and it is New Mexicans who are left on the hook to deal with industry waste once our oil and gas is exported overseas.

The Administration has taken the COVID-19 public health crisis seriously, and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has the power to address the crisis of toxic fracking waste right now.

But, here we are, at the precipice of hard realities. Outside the State Legislature, unable to meet with the Governor, and with no talk of meaningful industry reform on the horizon.

To say that the oil and gas Industry is entrenched in New Mexico and has a tight grip on our politics is a severe understatement. Even now, going into the next legislative session with a 1.5 billion dollar shortfall because of broken promises from the fracking industry.

And still, industry is clenching its fists on our state legislative body and highest leaders while front-line communities are fed up with being the collateral damage of doing business with an industry that plays by no rules.

We're here today to plead with Governor Lujan Grisham to make some rules.