



October 14, 2019

Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Governor of New Mexico  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

**Re: Pause Plans to Dump Oil and Gas Waste into New Mexico's Waters**

Dear Governor Lujan Grisham:

We are writing to urge you to pause your plans to authorize the dumping of oil and gas industry wastewater into New Mexico's streams, drinking water supplies, and on crops.

This week, the New Mexico Environment Department is kicking off a series of public stakeholder meetings to discuss regulating oil and gas industry wastewater. The intent of the meetings is to solicit public input on rules that would allow oil and gas waste to be used "outside of the oil and gas industry."

Oil and gas industry wastewater, including water produced during hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is too toxic to treat. Current water quality laws and regulations require this waste to be disposed in underground injection wells and do not allow discharge to the surface. There is absolutely no scientific information or studies indicating the oil and gas industry's waste has become any less toxic or untreatable. Any suggestion that the oil and gas industry's waste can be regulated and discharged into the waters of New Mexico is at odds with reality.

While the Department claims it is compelled to adopt regulations under the 2019 Produced Water Act, nothing in this recently enacted legislation mandates, indicates, or suggests that New Mexico's Legislature intended to allow the reckless release of toxic waste into the state's waters. Accordingly, we request you direct the Department to pause its process.

We are also concerned that your environmental regulators are not equipped to adopt unbiased regulations that assure full protection of public health and the environment.

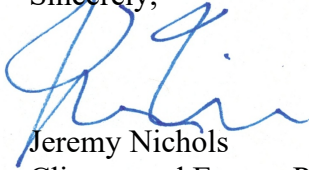
In recent comments to the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, it was reported that you told your Environment Department that they work for the oil and gas industry. We are deeply concerned that the Environment Department's attempt to regulate toxic fracking waste may ultimately give the oil and gas industry a free pass to pollute.

The climate crisis is already ravaging New Mexico and projections indicate the state faces increasing water shortages and more intense droughts. The last thing the New Mexico should be contemplating is allowing the oil and gas industry to poison the state's dwindling, irreplaceable water supplies.

We urge your Administration to instead focus on developing and implementing aggressive and effective water conservation and watershed resilience strategies to meet our climate challenges.

Please, pause your plans to allow the oil and gas industry to dump its toxic waste into New Mexico's waters.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Nichols  
Climate and Energy Program Director  
WildEarth Guardians