

New Mexico Environment Department

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Assessment of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Water Resources of New Mexico

August 2020

NMED Drinking Water Bureau and
U.S. Geological Survey NM Water Science Center



Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are known as “forever chemicals” because they resist degradation in the environment. New Mexico is taking proactive and reactive measures to address these pollutants in our vulnerable water resources.

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is partnering with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) New Mexico Water Science Center to study potential PFAS contamination. Until now, the distribution of these chemicals has only been investigated at a few sites around the state. This study is a critical leap forward for state and local officials and the public to learn about the presence and prevalence of these chemicals within New Mexico’s surface and groundwater supplies.



What is being sampled?

- Samples are tested for the presence and levels of 28 different PFAS compounds, including perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) – the two most widely known PFAS chemicals.
- Samples are collected from sites in 19 counties, including existing USGS surface water gages and groundwater wells, based on their proximity to known PFAS contamination or location relative to potential sources of PFAS contamination.

- Water samples will be collected by trained USGS field samplers and hydrologists. In addition to PFAS, a suite of other constituents that will provide geochemical context will also be tested for.

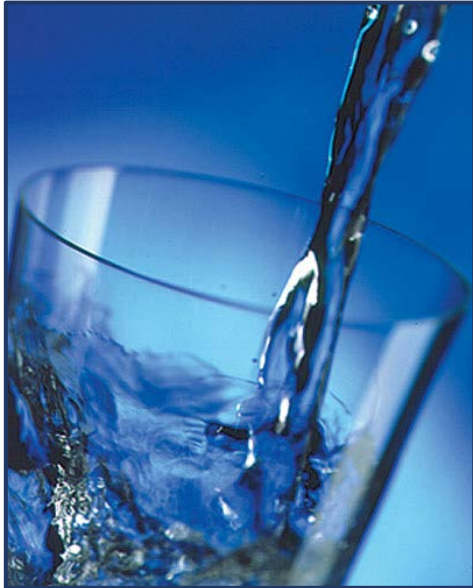
How much will the study cost and when will it be completed?

- Projected total cost: \$660,000 (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant to Drinking Water Bureau).
- Project timeframe: Sampling August 2020 - September 2021 with final report issued summer 2022.



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When will the public know the results?

Preliminary results will be available through USGS National Water Information System soon after laboratory analysis is completed at:



<https://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nm/nwis/qwdata>

- USGS experts will review data for integrity before final approval, typically on a monthly to quarterly frequency.

Next steps:

This effort is part of a larger statewide strategy to better understand PFAS in our environment so the state can take appropriate action to protect human health and the environment.

NMED will work closely with the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) and local officials to review results showing PFAS in surface and groundwater. NMED and DOH will take swift action to notify New Mexicans who are or may be impacted by PFAS contamination and limit exposure.



Following the conclusion of this study, next steps could include additional sampling, source investigations, public engagement campaigns, and treatment of contaminated water.

For more information, please contact:

Drinking Water Bureau

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