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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Ban on Domestic Well Water Use in the Animas Floodplain Lifted by New Mexico Environment Department and Health Department

Aztec, NM – Today, the precaution against using domestic well water from wells in the Animas floodplain (near the Animas River--site of the Gold King Mine Spill) is lifted by the New Mexico Environment Department and the Health Department with concurrence from the Environmental Protection Agency. All other precautions related to the Gold King Mine Spill of August 5, 2015 remain in place.

“The only reason we’re in this position today, to lift the precaution against using Animas floodplain domestic well water”, Said Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn, “is because of the rapid response of Environment, Health, New Mexico’s Office of the State Engineer, as well as New Mexico’s Departments of Agriculture, Game and Fish, and Homeland Security, and the work of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“Alarming levels of lead, cobalt, cadmium, arsenic, iron, manganese, and other heavy metals were evident in the initial pulse of contamination at Cement Creek and the Upper Animas River. With Governor Martinez’ leadership and Executive Order declaring emergency, the state team immediately mobilized to create and communicate safety precautions for New Mexicans barring river and well water use, while we simultaneously worked to collect surface and well water samples in San Juan County.

“Due to New Mexico’s rapid response, and collaboration with the EPA we are today able to lift the prohibition against using well water from Animas floodplain wells. The well sample collection and analysis and general understanding of the hydrogeology of the area provide us with the scientific justification we need today, to lift the ban against using domestic well water from the Animas floodplain.”

All other safety precautions remain in place as follows:

- Do Not Draw Canal or River Water
- Do Conserve Water
- As Needed, Do Get Potable Water from Water Stations
- Do Not Water Livestock with River Water
- Do Not Ingest Fish from the Rivers

(Full text of revised precautions are posted at www.NMEDSafeRiverWater.org and attached here.)

The geochemical and water-level data collected by NMED provide no evidence that private water wells are at risk of contamination from the mine waste in the river. The state's Environment and Health Departments along with the U.S. EPA continue to assess the full impact that the Gold King Mine Spill will have on New Mexico. The results of surface water testing and well water sampling in the Animas River floodplain in San Juan County continue to guide safe practices.

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Potable water stations for DRINKING WATER ONLY have been set up for residents at the following locations:

Aztec:

less than 100 gallons please

Aztec RV Fill Station – 201 W. Chaco – next to City Hall and the police station

Open all day

In Bloomfield:

Bloomfield Fire Station – 911 N First St.

Monday 8/10/15 - Friday 8/14/15 9:00am – 9:00pm

In Farmington:

Farmington Fire Station #6 – 3101 West Main St.

Sycamore Park Community Center – 1051 Sycamore St.

Monday 8/10/15 – Friday 8/14/15 8:00am - 8:00pm

In the County:

Center Point Fire Station # 1 – 16 Road 2755

Flora Vista Fire Station #1 – 2 Road 3275

Valley Fire Station #4 – 4 Road 6200

Stations will be open:

Monday 8/10/15 – Friday 8/14/15 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Bring your own drinking water containers. No large tanks.

LIVESTOCK AND RV WATER STATIONS

San Juan County Livestock – East of the Hogback – Livestock Evacuations/Emergency Water Delivery

New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service –

505-334-9496

Navajo Nation – West of the Hogback –
Livestock Evacuations/Emergency Water Delivery
Navajo Nation Livestock – 505-368-1037 or 928-871-7891

NAPI Non-Potable Water Fill Station

A map of the location can be found at www.navajopride.com

Jeremy Simpson 505-427-1843

As more information becomes available, updates will be sent out via media releases and on Facebook at the following locations:

San Juan County Office of Emergency Management (www.sjcoem.com and www.facebook.com/sanjuancountyofficeofemergencymanagement)

San Juan County Government (www.sjcounty.net and facebook – San Juan County, New Mexico. Government)

City of Farmington (www.fmtn.org and www.facebook.com/cityoffarmingtonnm)

Farmington Fire Department (www.facebook.com/Farmingtonfire)

Farmington Police Department (www.facebook.com/farmingtonpolicedepartmentnm)

City of Aztec Municipal Government Offices (www.aztecnm.gov and facebook – City of Aztec Municipal Government Offices)

NMSU Cooperative Extension Service 505-334-9496

NMED web site www.nmedriverwatersafety.org

US EPA web site http://epaossc.org/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=11082

Information is also available on the La Plata County website at <http://www.co.laplata.co.us/emergency>, San Juan Basin Health Department's Website at www.sjbhd.org, La Plata County Government Facebook and San Juan Basin Health Department Facebook.