



**ENFORCEMENT WATCH ALERT**

*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.*

**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Enforcement Watch Alert: 153 enforcement actions initiated; 69 resolved in March 2026**

**March Spotlight: Advancing water protection through compliance and enforcement**

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department is highlighting the ongoing success of its [Enforcement Watch](#) initiative, a transparency-focused program that provides the public with consistent and timely information about the Department's enforcement actions across environmental protection, public health, and worker safety programs.

By making enforcement data accessible, Enforcement Watch reinforces NMED's commitment to New Mexico residents for accountability and regulatory compliance statewide.

Launched in May 2023, Enforcement Watch shares monthly updates on enforcement actions and their resolutions. These updates are broadly divided into two categories:

- **Active Matters:** Alleged violations of state regulations, rules, permits, or licenses that are currently under investigation or pending resolution.
- **Resolved Matters:** Cases that have been adjudicated in court or administratively resolved, including the full payment of any civil penalties.

**March Spotlight: Water Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau**

The Water Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau was established in July 2025 to strengthen NMED's ability to ensure compliance with state and federal drinking water, surface water, and groundwater regulations. Since its creation, the bureau has taken on several high-profile cases to protect New Mexico's precious water resources.

For example, in February 2026, the WPCEB [issued an Administrative Compliance Order](#) to the U.S. Department of Energy related to the hexavalent chromium groundwater plume beneath Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The U.S. DOE is required to develop a corrective action plan for the mitigation and cleanup of the plume within 60 days and submit a revised groundwater discharge permit application to NMED. In addition, a civil penalty of \$9,784,503 was assessed for exceedances of groundwater standards for chromium at Los Alamos National Laboratory. A copy of the enforcement action is [available here](#).

“It is critical for the State of New Mexico to hold violators of the regulations and statutes protecting ground and surface water accountable,” said **WPCEB Bureau Chief Avery Young**. “Through effective enforcement the Department is able to protect human health and water resources while working with violators to complete the required activities to return to compliance.”

In addition to enforcement actions, WPCEB works with approximately 1,100 public water systems statewide to help ensure New Mexicans receive safe, reliable drinking water. Its staff also play a major role in developing and implementing new drinking water regulations, including rules related to lead and copper pipes and innovative PFAS protections.

### **Enforcement Watch updates for March 2026**

In March, the Compliance and Enforcement Division of NMED added 153 new cases to Active Matters and resolved 69, demonstrating ongoing enforcement and accountability across the state.

The following enforcement cases were initiated in March:

- 97 notices of violation issued by the Water Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 34 notices of violation issued by the Food Safety Program to retail food establishments
- 14 notices of violation issued by the Occupational Health & Safety Bureau
- 5 notices of violation issued by the Resource Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 3 notices of violation issued by the Environmental Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau

The following enforcement cases were resolved in March:

- 33 cases in the Water Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 17 cases in the Environmental Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 14 cases in the Resource Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 5 case in the Occupational Health & Safety Bureau

Highlights of alleged violations and resolved enforcement actions in March include:

- The Environmental Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau issued a [Notice of Violation](#) to Nutrien Ag Solution, of Loveland, Colorado regarding the Vado facility

located near Vado, New Mexico. The notice cited the company's failure to pay New Source Review permit fees in 2025.

- The Water Protection Compliance & Enforcement Bureau issued a [Notice of Violation](#) to Sunlit Hills Water System of Santa Fe for exceeding the Nitrate maximum contaminate level at Well #7 during the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2026. Under New Mexico regulations, the park must notify its customers of the violation within 24 hours of learning of the violation and continue doing so every 3 months as long as the exceedance persists.
- The Resource Protection Compliance & Enforcement Bureau issued a [Notice of Violation](#) to the Timberon Water and Sanitation District of Timberon, New Mexico for operating an unregistered solid waste facility since 1996 — in violation of the New Mexico Solid Waste Rules.
- A Citation and [Notification of Penalty](#) was issued to Helmerich and Payne, Inc. following an OSHA investigation, which identified a serious safety violation totaling \$16,554 in penalties. The violation stemmed from failing to ensure that employees were protected from struck-by falling object hazards related to installation of equipment which was new and unknown to employees.

Enforcement Watch provides the public, the business community, environmental nongovernment organizations, and municipal governments with easy access to see which organizations NMED has alleged are in violation of regulations, permits, and/or licenses administered by the Department. It is updated when violations are alleged or resolved. Retrospective enforcement matters are added as staffing resources allow. Organizations remain on Enforcement Watch until the alleged violations are corrected to the satisfaction of the Department.

The easiest way for an organization to avoid appearing on the Enforcement Watch is to stay off it in the first place by remaining in full compliance with applicable regulations. NMED encourages organizations that are unclear of their regulatory responsibilities to contact a consultant and conduct a third-party compliance audit and disclose potential violations.

NMED provides detailed compliance and enforcement metrics in the Compliance Measures section of the [Quarterly Performance Report](#).

The full Enforcement Watch can be viewed at <https://www.env.nm.gov/enforcement-watch>.

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