



**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**

February 16, 2026

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**Enforcement Watch Alert: 235 enforcement actions initiated; 41 resolved in January 2026**

**Compliance and Enforcement Division optimizes NMED 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.

**New Compliance and Enforcement Division innovates operations**

The New Mexico Environment Department took a significant step forward in 2025 by establishing the Compliance and Enforcement Division (CED) on July 1. The division protects public health and the environment by ensuring business and industry compliance with federal and state rules, permits, and licenses.

CED develops compliance assurance strategies based on federal and state priorities, as well as data-driven approaches designed to strengthen public health and environmental outcomes for communities.

Prior to the establishment of CED, program staff were responsible for both permitting and enforcement — a structure that led to burdensome workloads and created the potential for polluters being held accountable by those who originally issued their permits.

CED's creation marks a new direction for NMED, separating enforcement and permitting to improve customer service, allow staff to specialize in specific skill sets, and prevent conflicts of interest.

“The creation of the Compliance and Enforcement Division marks a new chapter in NMED's operations, where permittees are better served and bad actors are held accountable faster,” said **Bruce Baizel, Compliance and Enforcement Division Director**. “Through the establishment of this division, we've undertaken targeted enforcement actions and strengthened collaboration with water, air, and waste operators. As a result, we are reducing health-based violations, holding violators accountable, and helping to assure safer communities statewide.”

In carrying out its mission, CED works closely with other NMED divisions to understand the permit development process, identify violations, prepare enforcement actions, issue fines, pursue injunctive relief, negotiate settlements, and restore permittees to compliance. CED's work spans the full enforcement lifecycle — from inspection and investigation through resolution and verified return to compliance.

Major case achievements by the Compliance and Enforcement Division in 2025 include:

- A consent decree [signed with Hilcorp](#) that changed the way oil and gas wells in the San Juan Basin are drilled and completed, resulting in significant reductions in emissions and a \$9.4 million penalty.
- A [settlement with Union Pacific Railroad](#) stemming from a 2021 incident at its Santa Teresa terminal that caused 81 55-gallon containers of hazardous waste to be damaged. The settlement resulted in changes to hazardous waste tracking and new hazardous waste training requirements for employees. Union Pacific paid \$207,100 in penalties.
- An [OSHA inspection](#) of Aliyas Foods USA after employees were seriously injured while working with on-site machinery.
- An [Administrative Compliance Order](#) issued to Lovelace Biomedical Research Institute assessing a \$242,554 penalty following staffing deficiencies in hazardous waste management that led to missed inspections, improper disposal and labeling of hazardous waste, and violations of storage time limits at the Kirtland Air Force Base laboratory.

## **Enforcement Watch Updates for January 2026**

In January, the Compliance and Enforcement Division of NMED added 235 new cases to Active Matters and resolved 41, demonstrating ongoing enforcement and accountability across the state.

The following enforcement cases were initiated in January:

- 103 notices of violation issued by the Water Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 83 notices of violation issued by the Food Safety Program to retail food establishments
- 25 notices of violation issued by the Environmental Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 15 notices of violation issued by the Resource Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 9 notices of violation issued by the Occupational Health & Safety Bureau

The following enforcement cases were resolved in January:

- 20 cases in the Resource Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 15 cases in the Water Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau
- 6 cases in the Food Safety Program

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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