



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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.

October 6, 2026

Contact: Bre Anderson, Communications Deputy Director
New Mexico Environment Department
505.697.0238 | breanna.anderson@env.nm.gov

LeakTracer saves up to 328 million gallons of water annually
New technology identifies 216 drinking water leaks across New Mexico

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) today released its [Year One summary report for LeakTracer](#) – a statewide initiative leveraging satellite technology and field inspections to identify water leaks.

In the first year, NMED and ASTERRA worked with 28 utilities, inspecting 181 miles of distribution pipeline, roughly the distance from Albuquerque to Farmington.

The program identified 216 leaks in these systems: 45 on main lines, 54 on service lines, and 117 on customer-owned lines. Repairing these leaks would save an estimated 623.5 gallons per minute – about 898,000 gallons per day and 328 million gallons of drinking water per year. That's equivalent to the annual usage of 6,400 New Mexican households.

Identify and fixing these leaks also saves the utilities and ratepayers money – the participating water systems stand to reduce water production costs by approximately \$505,000 annually. Savings that can be reinvested into critical infrastructure, accelerating local system upgrades while reducing the amount of treated water lost before it reaches customers.

Drinking water leaks increase operating costs for utilities, expenses that can ultimately be passed on to ratepayers. By identifying leaks early, LeakTracer provides utilities the information they need to make repairs before problems become more costly, saving water and money while helping keep rates affordable for customers.

“LeakTracer shows what’s possible when we pair innovation with stewardship,” said **Environment Secretary James Kenney**. “Communities can save hundreds of millions of gallons of water a year, protect ratepayers in the process, and make their water systems more resilient.”

Launched after a successful 2025 pilot, LeakTracer expanded in 2026 in partnership with ASTERRA USA— a San Diego-based company that uses patented satellite radar technology, which penetrates soil, asphalt, trees, and pavement, to map leaks. The team then identifies

points of interest which are confirmed by boots-on-the-ground inspectors, enabling local utilities to prioritize repairs before leaks even surface.

The program's performance advances the goals of the [Governor's 50-Year Water Action Plan](#) to conserve water and strengthen community resilience through proactive infrastructure management.

"ASTERRA is a game changer for us. Before them, we found leaks the old-fashioned way; waiting for water to surface or for a customer complaint," said **Truth or Consequences Mayor Rolf Hechler**. "Now, we can fix leaks before we can see them, saving water, money and time."

Water systems interested in the LeakTracer Program can apply through NMED's streamlined process. From the [LeakTracer homepage](#), systems can either submit the CONTACT US form and a NMED representative will follow up, or select APPLY NOW to apply through the Rural Infrastructure Program (RIP).

More information about LeakTracer, including how community water systems can apply to participate, is available at <https://www.env.nm.gov/leaktracer/>.

###

NMED does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age or sex in the administration of its programs or activities, as required by applicable laws and regulations. NMED is responsible for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning non-discrimination requirements implemented by 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972. If you have any questions about this notice or any of NMED's non-discrimination programs, policies or procedures, you may contact: Kate Cardenas, Non-Discrimination Coordinator | NMED | 1190 St. Francis Dr., Suite N4050 | P.O. Box 5469 | Santa Fe, NM 87502 or (505) 827-2855 or nd.coordinator@env.nm.gov. If you believe that you have been discriminated against with respect to a NMED program or activity, you may contact the Non-Discrimination Coordinator.

###