

La Cienega Valley Association
P.O. Box 31058
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87594
lacienegavalley.com
Preserving Our Rural Way of Life

February 6, 2024

**Via Email: henry.c.minitrez.civ@army.mil, ngo.kim@epa.gov,
jwblair@santafenm.gov, gshaffer@santafecountynm.gov**

Department of Defense Army National Guard
% Mr. Hank Minitrez
Public Affairs Director
New Mexico National Guard
5030 Fallen Leaf Ln
Glendale, AZ 85310

NM Environmental Protection Agency
c/o Kim Ngo
Water Division Director
USEPA REGION 6
1201 Elm Street
Suite 500
Mail Code: AR
Dallas, TX 75270-210

Santa Fe County Commission
c/o Gregory Shaeffer
County Manager
102 Grant Avenue
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Santa Fe City Council
c/o John Blair
City Manager
200 Lincoln Avenue
Santa Fe, NM 87504

RE: PFAS in La Cieneguilla and Other Water Quality Issues (Santa Fe County New Mexico) Request for Consultation and Assistance

Dear Messrs,

La Cienega Valley Association
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We hope this letter finds you well. The La Cienega Valley Association Board (LCVA Board) is a community organization under the Santa Fe County's Sustainable Land Development Code and we have been working on behalf of the residents of La Cienega and La Cieneguilla for about 40 years. We are writing to you to request support, research and remediation in addressing the water contamination issues in La Cienega and La Cieneguilla, of Santa Fe County.

Specifically, it has been brought to the community's attention that certain wells in La Cieneguilla have been contaminated by PFAS and related contaminants. It is well documented that these contaminants can cause certain adverse health effects, such as cancers, liver and kidney problems, as well as create adverse developmental outcomes for babies. It is unclear whether the contamination has spread beyond La Cieneguilla into La Cienega or how far into La Cieneguilla there is contamination. We are also not sure of the definitive source of contamination because additional research and testing is needed and we are asking for your mutual collaboration and support in funding research in this area.

We are also unsure whether the levels present in the water table can or will cause adverse health conditions. A number of potential sources have been identified in the "Draft Final Site Inspection Report Army Aviation Support Facility Santa Fe, NM" report compiled in February 2023, by the Army National Guard (attached). We understand that the National Guard acknowledges that there was PFAS in soil samples and in perched groundwater samples they tested but denies that the Army National Guard Facility has allowed any PFAS to leach into the general ground water table. Other non-tested sources of PFAS could also exist including septic systems, animal waste, and various commercial activities. We need to know the source(s), so we can stop the spread of PFAS into the water table.

We are concerned for the public's safety and health, as well as the high and unaffordable costs to the residents of this area to get well testing done, water filters installed, and to address any medical issues that may arise as a result of exposure to PFAS and other contaminants. We live in a traditionally underserved area of this community and are seeking the cooperation and support of each of your agencies in assessing the sources of contamination of these wells, assisting residents in obtaining testing and filtration systems and remediating the sources of contamination once they have been identified.

It is important that we identify who is and who is not impacted by these contaminants and to continue tracking or tracing the movement of PFAS in the water table. It is only through joint effort and cooperation that these issues can be addressed and we are asking you to communicate

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with one another and formulate a plan for providing information and data to the public as well as remediating the impacts of PFAS as a contaminant in this area.

We understand that the emergence of PFAS is a growing issue of public concern nationwide, making the need for resolution and strategic guidance for the public even more relevant. Residents of our community do not know who to turn to for support or information about PFAS. The potential for confusion and the spread of misinformation due to lack of guidance from our public officials is high, and we need someone who can help summarize this complicated data and provide clear answers to our community. We specifically ask that you help obtain resources to:

- 1) identify the source(s) of contamination;
- 2) identify any responsible parties,
- 3) secure funding to provide or reimburse Santa Fe County residents with free water testing at least in an area within a certain radius of the wells where positive test results occurred and allocate sources of funding for testing of surface water supplies to protect agriculture and livestock,
- 4) provide clean drinking water to those households with PFAS levels above 4 parts per billion (PPT) until whole house water filtration systems have been installed,
- 5) provide or reimburse blood work testing for those who may have been drinking water from their well above 4 PPT, and
- 6) educate the public on what steps can be taken to mitigate PFAS exposure such as filtration systems that are proven to work;
- 7) provide or reimburse households for the purchase and installation of treatment on wells with PFAS levels above 4 PPT.

We would like to know whether there is a treatable plume or source of PFAS contaminants and whether it can be removed from the water table or diluted so that PFAS levels no longer exceed 4 PPT. Residents in our community also produce food and livestock for the consumption of the general public. Our residents need to be provided with an emergency source of clean water to provide to their livestock, animals, and for use on their fields if the PFAS levels exceed 4 PPT.

There are other contaminants as well that we would like investigated at the lower Santa Fe River below the City of Santa Fe's Paseo Real Wastewater Treatment Facility where we know that higher levels of E. Coli than are permitted under the City's NPDES permit have been released into our

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water for decades. We know wells near the river often contain high levels of nitrates and we ask the City and NM EPA to conduct tests and soil sampling along the riverbed and of the water table along the river to see whether the soil and water are contaminated and to what degree. We know the City is beginning the process of looking to obtain funds for a new wastewater treatment plant and we appreciate these efforts, which are long past due, but we also need to know what contaminants we are living with already and whether there are ways they can be remediated. Some of those contaminants include: pharmaceuticals, pesticides, formaldehyde, ethylene glycol, and petroleum byproducts along with heavy metals.

We ask that a joint task force is created in the next ninety (90) days to address these issues and that we remain informed of any progress that is made. We also note that Santa Fe County and especially County Commissioner Bustamante has been working hard to try to create a place for the public to obtain information and they have hired a PFAS public outreach coordinator who we will be meeting with next week. We appreciate Commissioner Bustamante taking the lead and hope the other agencies included in this letter will also reach out to us and Commissioner Bustamante to collaborate on the best way to address this issue moving forward.

Sincerely yours,



Andrea La Cruz Crawford
LCVA President
PO Box 31058
Santa Fe, NM 87594
(505) 577-9692
lacienegavalleyinfo@gmail.com

cc: Governor Lujan Grisham (via website email), Congressman Lujan (c/o Carmela_Quintana@lujan.senate.gov), Congresswoman Leger Fernandez (c/o Matt.Miller2@mail.house.gov), Representative Chandler (christine.chandler@nmlegis.gov); Senator Stefanics (Liz.Stefanics@nmlegis.gov); Commissioner Bustamante (cbustamante@santafecountynm.gov); John Dupuis (Jdupuis@santafecountynm.gov)

Attachments: Draft Final Report of the Army National Guard; Santa Fe County Press Release; 2023 Wastewater Treatment Plant Readings.