

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

NEWS RELEASE

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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.

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NMED transforms public participation through easy-to-use website tools and design

Commenting on proposed rules and permit actions is easier than ever

SANTA FE — It has never been easier for New Mexicans to participate in the public comment process for matters that impact their community. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) launched its [Public Comment Portal](#) as an easy-to-use method to accept public comments and documents. This is the latest functional improvement to NMED's on-going efforts to make the agency and its actions more accessible to all New Mexicans.

"We continue to invest in making the Environment Department more accessible for all New Mexicans — including the public's ability to easily comment on proposed rules and permits that can impact their environment," said **NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney**. "Our public comment portal allows community voices to inform our activities, further demonstrating our innovation in Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's commitment to open and collaborative state government."

NMED encourages the public to voice their opinion on draft permits, rulemaking proposals, and agenda items that are before the numerous Boards, Commissions, and Hearing Officers. The Public Comment Portal is accessible under the Public Participation menu on the [NMED homepage](#). Once on the portal, users will see all matters currently open for public comment. After selecting a specific topic, users can see links to all relevant documents, make a comment, and upload their own supporting documents.

"I am excited about New Mexico's new public comment portal, said **EPA Region 6 Administrator Dr. Earthea Nance**. The portal is in English and Spanish and it gives the public access to the state's permitting and rulemaking processes. NMED is taking a leadership role in building a program that is inclusive of its communities."

"At EPA, we're committed to ensuring environmental and public health protections for all people. Tools like the one announced today in New Mexico deliver on this commitment," said **EPA Senior Advisor for Environmental Justice Robin Morris Collin**. "Our work should be shaped by the lived experiences of impacted communities, and I applaud the New Mexico Environment Department for developing this tool which will improve access to the decision-making process and ensure more communities have a seat at the table."

To support the public in using the new Public Comment Portal, NMED developed tutorial videos on how to use the Public Comment Portal. The videos are available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

“Before the launch of the Public Comment Portal, all public comments were managed manually,” said **Office of Public Facilitation Hearing Officer Gregory Chakalian**. “The portal automates public comment management, which will help expedite these matters while saving staff time.”

Other improvements that NMED has deployed to continue to further public engagement include:

- In May 2021, [NMED launched an interactive public calendar on its website](#), making it easier and more efficient for the public, regulated community, stakeholders and members of the media to find information on events happening across the Department. The calendar includes information on everything from public comment periods and hearings to specialized trainings for the regulated community. The “search” function allows users to search for specific types of events or topics. Once a user identifies an event on the Department’s calendar they want to follow or attend, there are multiple options to share it on social media, add to their desktop calendar (i.e., MS Outlook, Google or iCal calendar), forward to friends, or set reminders via email/text. The Event Calendar is one of the top three most visited webpages on the agency’s website.
- In August 2021, [NMED launched a new website](#) that includes a one-stop shop format for businesses and individuals to find permitting forms and guidance; review public notice and docketed matters pages; make online payments; and read strategic plans and performance measures.

“The rollout of the Public Comment Portal, combined with the launch of our new calendar and website in 2021, demonstrates our commitment to transparency,” said **NMED Chief Information Officer Peter Street**. “Using information technology, we are modernizing how the public can easily interact with state government.”

In July of this year, NMED will deploy a website-wide translation service so those individuals with limited English proficiency will have full and equal access to all the information and resources on its website. While NMED offers many website resources in English and Spanish, the planned improvements will offer the entire NMED website in English, Spanish and other languages too.

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