

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

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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 announces \$7.3 million in Volkswagen Settlement to community emission reduction projects

SANTA FE — Today, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is proud to announce that \$7.3 million has been awarded for seven projects across the state from the Volkswagen Settlement fund.

NMED designated this third and final round of federal settlement funding for diesel emission reduction projects throughout New Mexico.

“By investing over \$7 million in our urban and rural communities in clean energy vehicles, we are improving air quality while reducing emissions that cause climate change,” said **Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham**. “Local governments are leading the way to a cleaner New Mexico.”

“These cleaner industrial vehicles will eliminate more than 15 tons of nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions that contribute to ozone pollution while improving air quality in the communities in which they operate.” said **Environment Cabinet Secretary James Kenney**.

The successful recipients will share \$7.3 million to purchase 29 new electric transit buses, electric and alternate-fueled school buses and shuttle buses, and alternate-fueled and clean diesel solid waste and public works vehicles. The applications were evaluated based on several criteria including reduction of emissions, environmental justice and impacted population, and cost effectiveness.

The recipients are:

- **City of Socorro**, Socorro County for six near-zero compressed natural gas refuse and dump trucks
- **South Central Solid Waste Authority**, Las Cruces, Doña Ana County for replacement of five class 8 diesel trucks
- **San Juan County Public Works**, Aztec, San Juan County for replacement of one diesel dump truck with snowplow attachment
- **Santa Fe Solid Waste Management Agency**, Santa Fe County for replacement of two haul trucks and one roll-off truck
- **Santa Fe Public Schools**, Santa Fe County for three electric school buses
- **City of Albuquerque Transit Department**, Bernalillo County for five electric transit buses
- **University of New Mexico Parking & Transportation Services**, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County for six near-zero compressed natural gas shuttle buses

Eligible projects included the repowering or replacement of Class 8 local freight trucks and drayage trucks; Class 4 – 8 school buses, shuttle buses, or transit buses; freight switcher locomotives; and Class 4 – 7 local freight trucks. NMED received proposals during the application period which opened December 3, 2021 and closed on March 15, 2022.

The primary goal of the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Program (Program) is to offset excess emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) emitted by affected Volkswagen vehicles registered within New Mexico. The selected projects will reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) by more than 15 tons in urban, rural, and Native communities in New Mexico. These projects will efficiently and cost-effectively reduce NOx emissions in areas of New Mexico that are nearing the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone.

NOx emissions are responsible for increased ozone, as well as increased nitrogen dioxide levels, both of which have adverse effects on human health and the environment. Reducing NOx emissions promote healthier communities by reducing premature deaths, hospitalizations for cardiovascular illness, hospitalizations for respiratory illness, and emergency room visits, yielding billions in health benefits. Similarly, these investments have positive impacts on the economy, businesses, and encourage the use of new technologies needed to tackle the climate crisis.

In 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and VW reached a federal settlement after VW admitted to installing emissions defeat devices on diesel passenger vehicles that impaired their emission control systems and caused emissions to exceed EPA's standards, resulting in harmful air pollution. The illegal software allowed the on-board computer to detect when the car is under official testing conditions and to run the exhaust aftertreatment system (NOx catalyst) only under those conditions. But those emissions controls were not fully engaged on the road, allowing cars to spew nitrogen oxides at up to 40 times the levels permitted under the Clean Air Act.

NMED tracks its investments in communities as part of its [performance measures](#) and targeted investing \$65 million throughout the state in fiscal year 2022.

The full list of projects is available on NMED's VW Settlement webpage at <https://www.env.nm.gov/vw-settlement/>. For technical questions about the VW Settlement, contact Neal Butt at (505) 629-2972 or by e-mail at neal.butt@state.nm.us.

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