



Media Alert

Will New Mexico's Water Quality Standards Be 'Milked' for All They're Worth?

- What:** New Mexico dairy industry's petition to roll-back vital water, environmental and human health safety standards before the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission. [WQCC Meeting Agenda Item #8]
- When:** Tuesday, September 10th, 2013 beginning at 9:00 AM MT
- Where:** New Mexico Capitol Building, 490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 307, Santa Fe, NM
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In New Mexico, ground water is drinking water. In fact, a full 90 percent of all New Mexico residents drink water from ground sources. Do we know what will happen to New Mexico's environment if current safeguards for animal waste treatment in the State's massive, thriving dairy industry are gutted? Do we want to find out?

The dairy industry is on the move this week to reverse New Mexico law and support their plan for higher profits through lower environmental standards by instituting harmful water control rule-changes. These include:

- Cut backs on routine water testing, disallowing early detection, prevention of pollution and implementation of cost-saving clean-up actions
- Cut backs on monitoring wells placed to detect pollution at dairy facilities before public-use waters are threatened
- Eliminating the synthetic plastic liner requirement when there is evidence of leeching of large quantities of liquid animal waste into the land and groundwater
- Make discretionary the Environment Department's continued groundwater monitoring and potential site clean-up by dairy operators once their facilities have ceased operation

Arguments will be heard from the Dairy Industry Group for a Cleaner Environment and the New Mexico Environmental Law Center (NMELC). The NMELC will be representing the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club and Amigos Bravos, with the support and assistance from Socially Responsible Agricultural Project.

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*The mission of the **New Mexico Environmental Law Center** is to protect New Mexico's natural environment and achieve environmental justice for New Mexico's communities through legal representation, policy advocacy and public education. The New Mexico Environmental Law Center's attorneys have handled over 100 critical cases in low-income and minority communities fighting pollution and environmental degradation. The NMELC charges few, if any, fees to its clients, most of who are from Hispanic and Native American communities. The NMELC celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Membership and gifts help New Mexico communities protect their natural environment and their health from toxic pollution, the degrading effects of growth and liabilities created by irresponsible mining. www.nmelc.org*

*The **Socially Responsible Agricultural Project** educates the public about the problems caused by factory farms, works to help communities protect themselves from the devastating impacts of these facilities while, at the same time, providing help and guidance for those who are trying to reclaim agriculture by producing and marketing sustainable agricultural goods. www.sraproject.org*

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