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Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Release rule now in effect upon publication in the New Mexico Register

Santa Fe, NM – Today, updates to the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) Oil Conservation Division’s (OCD) release rule, NMAC 19.15.29, go into effect upon publication in the New Mexico Register. The Oil Conservation Commission [approved the final amendments](#) to the rule in July which prohibit major and minor spills from oil and gas industry operations, while giving OCD increased authority to take enforcement actions against operators who spill. The rule changes were prompted by a joint petition filed by the OCD and WildEarth Guardians and provide another example of the importance of collaboration and stakeholder engagement to find solutions.

“Finalization of the release rules are another example of this administration’s commitment to collaboration and protecting the environment,” said EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “Now that the updated release rules are in effect, the OCD will have additional tools to prevent and remediate spills that occur in the oil and gas field.”

Under the previous rule, spills were permissible and OCD was limited to penalizing operators who failed to report the spill to OCD. Now the Division will be able to levy civil penalties against operators for spills. At the hearing, OCD staff testified that the change would encourage operators to take actions to prevent and minimize spills from occurring.

The OCD civil penalties calculation method has been updated to reflect the changes and can be found [here](#).

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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

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