

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
Todd E. Leahy, JD, PhD, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Adrienne Sandoval, Oil Conservation Division Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Susan Torres
Public Information Officer, EMNRD
susan.torres@state.nm.us
505-476-3226



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EMNRD's Oil Conservation Division cleans up site in Southeast New Mexico

Carlsbad, NM – The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's (EMNRD) Oil Conservation Division (OCD) announces that it has completed an extensive site stabilization of a release outside Carlsbad. The estimated 10,000 barrel release was the result of a catastrophic water tank failure that impacted an alleged unlawful Surface Waste Management Facility. The mixture of petroleum hydrocarbons and fresh water then flowed southeast across US Highway 62/180 and was impacting nearby residences. The OCD took swift action to stabilize the site, protecting human health and the environment.

The OCD was notified of the release in October 2021 by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED). Once reported, OCD worked closely with NMED to determine appropriate jurisdiction and a response plan, highlighting the collaborative partnership between the agencies. Given the parameters of the release, OCD was the lead responding agency.

OCD site stabilization involved the removal of impacted soils and vegetation in and around a private residence, an active RV park, and a public highway right of way. OCD disposed of 391 cubic yards of impacted material and collected approximately 100 soil samples for laboratory analysis. In addition, the OCD coordinated with the landowners for the installation of 513 cubic yards of clean compacted backfill to return the site to its previous state.

"The release outside Carlsbad put the OCD in a situation where we needed to act quickly to protect human health and the environment and that is exactly what we did," said OCD Director Adrienne Sandoval. "This was a complicated scenario and I'm proud of our team who got the work done efficiently. The incident underscored the OCD's need for additional resources and a healthy Oil Reclamation Fund budget to manage unforeseen cleanups."

Given the location and size of the release, the OCD began site stabilization quickly using the Oil Reclamation Fund. Typically, the responsible party, which is traditionally an operator, would remediate a site following a release. However, due to the unique circumstances surrounding this release and that there was no permitted operator, OCD stepped in to address the multiple

impacted areas. The Division will pursue legal remedies to recoup the cost of the efforts and to deter any future unlawful operation.

In the ongoing legislative session, the OCD supports the executive budget recommendation which would add a total of 25 new positions, allowing the Division to complete more remediation and compliance actions.

The OCD encourages the public to notify the Division about potential violations. Details of violations can be sent to OCD.Enviro@state.nm.us.



1 Unlawful Surface Waste Facility looking South US 160



2 Hydrocarbon Impacted Soils and Vegetation



4 Hydrocarbon impacts near residence



3 Removal of impacts near residence



6 Removal of impacts near highway



5 Site stabilization and reclamation

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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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