



For immediate release:

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Deadline for Metering Groundwater Diversions in the Lower Rio Grande is Set for March 1, 2006

(LAS CRUCES, New Mexico) – The Office of the State Engineer's deadline for all water rights owners in the Lower Rio Grande Water Master District to install groundwater metering devices on their wells is set for March 1, 2006.

"Every groundwater well within the Lower Rio Grande Water Master District must be metered, with the exception of wells that serve domestic use of a single household, the irrigation of one acre of non-commercial trees, lawn or garden, and those used for the purpose of watering livestock in a grazing operation," said State Engineer John D'Antonio.

The order for the groundwater metering devices in the district was signed in December of 2004.

The March 1, 2006 deadline was chosen to give water right owners adequate notice that meters are now required and to provide them with a sufficient amount of time to install the meters. The groundwater metering order will help the Office of the State Engineer to manage and administer the waters of the Lower Rio Grande stream system, promote the expedited and leasing and marketing of water, conserve water, and prevent the over-appropriation of water.

The State Engineer declared the water master district in the area to actively manage and administer the diversions and use of water from the Lower Rio Grande on a day-to-day basis. A water master was hired for the area in March 2005.

For more information on the groundwater metering order contact the Office of the State Engineer Las Cruces office at, (505) 524-6161 or download the order from the Office of the State Engineer website at: www.ose.state.nm.us.

(MORE)

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

The Interstate Stream Commission is charged with separate duties including protecting New Mexico's right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts, as well as water planning.

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