



For immediate release:

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State Engineer Signs Special Orders Declaring and Extending Underground Water Basins Throughout the State of New Mexico

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) — State Engineer John D'Antonio today signed six special orders declaring administration over six new underground water basins and extending the boundaries of nine existing underground water basins throughout the State of New Mexico.

The State Engineer declared the Clayton, Causey Lingo, Mount Riley, Hatchita, Yaqui, and Cloverdale Underground Water Basins, and extended the Canadian River, Curry County, Fort Sumner, Lea County, Tularosa, Animas, Lordsburg, Nutt-Hockett, and Playas Underground Water Basins.

The areas being declared and extended encompass approximately 11,500 square miles, about 9.5 percent of the State of New Mexico, giving the State Engineer jurisdiction over the appropriation and use of all of the underground waters in New Mexico. The State Engineer has had jurisdiction over the appropriation and use of the surface waters in the state since 1907.

"The declaration and extension of each basin will not affect the validity of any water right in existence at the time the basin was declared or extended," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "The purpose of the declarations and extension of the basins is to provide for the statewide administration of underground water to accurately account for and administer the resources and to prevent impairment to valid existing rights."

(MORE)

In addition to statewide administration, the State Engineer has declared and extended the underground basins for the following reasons:

- Apply the Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Underground Water statewide
- Apply all state laws pertaining to the administration of underground water statewide
- Promote and support Active Water Resources Management
- Protect fresh water supplies within regional aquifers
- Provide for the orderly development of groundwater resources in the basin or basin extension
- Provide for a more complete and accurate public record of the water rights in the basin or basin extension
- Provide for the orderly completion of regional water planning
- Prevent actions that would be contrary to the conservation of water within the state
- Prevent actions that would be detrimental to the public welfare of the state

Public meetings will be held around the state in October to discuss the basin declarations and extensions. A hearing on the declarations and extensions will be held in Santa Fe on December 9, 2005.

Information and maps on the basin declarations can be obtained on the Office of the State Engineer website at www.ose.state.nm.us . They may also be picked up at any district office of the Office of the State Engineer, or by contacting Paul Wells at (505) 827-6120 or by email at paul.wells@state.nm.us.

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