



**For immediate release:**

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## **State Engineer Sends Letter to Unmetered Well Owners**

**(LAS CRUCES, New Mexico)** — State Engineer John D'Antonio began sending letters to owners of unmetered wells with a permit condition on June 23, 2006. The letters serve as a notice to well owners that failure to meter the well within 30 days will result in referral of this matter to the legal division for appropriate legal remedy.

"We are sending these letters to people who received a well permit with a specific condition that a meter must be installed on their well, but for some reason they have not installed a meter and are operating the well," said Water Resources Allocation Program Director John T. Romero. "The letters are the first step toward getting people into compliance with the conditions of their permit. Hopefully well owners will install meters and avoid the next step of having their permits cancelled."

The letters follow the two-week metering inspection conducted by the Office of the State Engineer in March 2006. During the inspections, Office of the State Engineer staff discovered that more than 400 wells with a permit condition were found to not have meters. Well owners with a permit condition for metering must install a meter on their well before they can begin to divert water. Wells that operate under a permit from the Office of the State Engineer do not fall under the metering order issued for the Lower Rio Grande by the State Engineer.

In December 2004, the State Engineer issued a metering order to improve water management in the Lower Rio Grande. Under the metering order, the deadline for meter installation was March 1, 2006. During the March 2006 metering inspections, the Office of the State Engineer determined that more than 2,000 wells that fall under the metering order had not installed a meter. Any well that does not have a meter installed by January 1, 2007 cannot be used for any purpose except those permitted for single household use or livestock.

Office of the State Engineer staff continue to process information from the metering inspections and intends to contact the owner of every well inspected. If necessary, another inspection will take place around November 2006.

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.

For questions about metering please contact the Lower Rio Grande Water Master Sheldon Dorman at [sheldon.dorman@state.nm.us](mailto:sheldon.dorman@state.nm.us) or (505) 524-6161.

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