

Claims Cannon Air Force Base failed to properly address groundwater contamination

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Environment Department has determined that Cannon Air Force Base is operating in violation of the New Mexico Water Quality Act and its correlated Ground and Surface Water Protection Regulations.

NMED is requiring swift action from Cannon Air Force Base to comply with specific requirements of New Mexico law to protect human health and the environment.

For approximately 40 years, Cannon Air Force Base used PFAS, a suite of hundreds of compounds, that was contained in aqueous film-forming firefighting foam used in training and actual firefighting events at the base. Use of PFAS in AFFF at Cannon Air Force Base has now ceased. However, PFAS remains at very high concentrations in groundwater both on and off the base.

In issuing the Notice of Violation, NMED is requiring the Air Force to initiate the following mitigating activities:

Identification and timeline of options to be evaluated as potential short-term corrective measures for affected dairies, including water hauling and water treatment of contaminated well sources for both livestock and irrigation of crops.

In conjunction with the findings of a technical working group, evaluation of the feasibility of installing one or more treatment systems on contaminated water supply wells.

This Notice of Violation is NMED's final effort to obtain the Air Force's voluntary compliance in these matters.

NMED issues notice of violation to U.S. Air Force

Written by Staff Reports

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Failure to comply with the Notice of Violation may result in NMED's issuance of an Administrative Compliance Order that can assess civil penalties for up to \$15,000 per day for each violation.

Civil penalties may also be assessed for up to \$10,000 per day for each violation of any other provision of the WQA, or any regulation, standard or order adopted pursuant to such other provision.

PFAS are emerging chemicals that may be associated with an increased risk of cancer and other health ailments. They are also known to be environmentally persistent, mobile in groundwater, and bioaccumulate in the food web.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set a lifetime drinking water Human Health Advisory for two PFAS chemicals at 70 nanograms per liter, or parts per trillion.

To learn more about PFAS and potential effects on health, download the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fact sheet at:

www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/docs/pfas_fact_sheet.pdf

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