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SANTA FE **-** The New Mexico Environment Department issued a Notice of Violation to Holloman Air Force Base on Feb 6 in response to detected toxic pollutants in groundwater. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances were found in groundwater on base at levels nearly twice the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water health advisory in monitoring wells covered by Holloman's groundwater discharge permit.

Violations of the discharge permit trigger corrective action requirements for the Air Force.

The Air Force reported concentrations of PFAS at 137 parts per trillion at monitoring wells. The EPA's drinking water health advisory for PFAS is 70 parts per trillion. The Air Force also reported identifying sampling results at other locations on base not covered by the groundwater discharge permit exceeding 1.2 million parts per trillion: over 18,000 times the EPA's drinking water health advisory.

PFAS were present in an aqueous film-forming foam once used by the Air Force in firefighting. The chemicals are known to be environmentally persistent, mobile in groundwater, and bioaccumulate in the food web.

"We are dismayed by the Air Force's lack of prompt response to the contamination found at Holloman and will use all avenues available to us to hold the military accountable and make affected New Mexicans whole again," said Air Force Secretary-designate Jim Kenney. "This Notice of Violation is a step toward ensuring that happens."

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said, "Time is of the essence. I demand an action-oriented,

productive environment where these long-standing issues are being substantially addressed by the Air Force. New Mexico stakeholders are asking me to weigh in directly because the Air Force has not been responsive to them. This is unacceptable."

NMED is actively investigating whether there are supply wells being utilized in the area of the contamination, but department officials believe that to be unlikely due to the brackish nature of the groundwater there. It is also assessing whether ecological receptors have been exposed to PFAS at Holloman.

The state learned of PFAS contamination above EPA's health advisory in groundwater beneath Cannon Air Force Base near Clovis last year. PFAS levels at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque have been detected at very low levels and do not reach the drinking water health advisory level.

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