

Newly posted data reveals opportunities to cut industry emissions

Written by Staff Reports

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SANTA FE - The New Mexico Environment Department posted excess emissions data reported to the Department on its website Oct. 15. The data follows:

“Transparency of self-reported emissions data, in conjunction with our regulatory efforts to curb excess methane emissions in the oil and gas industry, is essential to understanding air quality impacts in communities around the state,” according to NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney. “Compliance with permits and air quality regulations is not optional. It is expected by the communities in which these facilities operate and by NMED.”

These excess emissions, which can include volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides, make up a large part of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions and are contributing to concerning levels of ozone present in seven New Mexico counties. Posting this data highlights the extent of the problem and allows the public to see for itself the volume of emissions emitted in excess of allowable, permitted limits.

While excess emissions are not necessarily violations, they present an opportunity for reductions. Industrial sources that emit greater than 10 pounds per hour or 25 tons of criteria, pollutants annually are required to operate under an NMED air quality permit and comply with such permit conditions.

Typical permitted sources include asphalt plants, oil and gas production facilities, and power

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plants. Facilities that are operating without a permit or operating outside of permit conditions are encouraged to self-disclose violations to NMED as soon as possible.

High levels of ozone can cause respiratory illnesses in humans. Ozone is created by chemical reactions between volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides in the presence of sunlight.

***More information on the health impacts of ozone is available at:
[epa.gov/ground-level-ozone-pollution/health-effects-ozone-pollution](https://www.epa.gov/ground-level-ozone-pollution/health-effects-ozone-pollution)***