ALBUQUERQUE —Governor Susana Martinez announced that the U.S. Air Force is now pumping and treating water from a jet fuel leak first detected at Kirtland Air Force Base in 1999 July 1.

While previous administrations failed to hold the Air Force accountable, Martinez's administration has worked closely with the Air Force to facilitate the clean-up.

"Protecting our precious water supply is non-negotiable," Martinez said. "We have taken the necessary steps to begin addressing the Kirtland fuel spill when other administrations hesitated to engage with the problem. The U.S. Air Force has stepped up and done the work required by my Administration to begin remediating the plume of contaminated water beneath Kirtland and parts of Albuquerque. There's still a lot of work that needs to be done, but today's announcement shows that we have made great strides in protecting Albuquerque's water supply."

While the jet fuel leak was first detected in 1999, previous administrations failed to work to hold the Air Force accountable. After years of delay from previous administrations, the Martinez Administration began leading the efforts, working closely with the Air Force, Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, and the City of Albuquerque to design effective measures for cleaning up the fuel spill, based on sound science and engineering.

These efforts included setting and enforcing deadlines to ensure timely progress on the clean-up, and working closely with the Air Force, as well as local, state, and federal partners to provide technical, regulatory, and other expertise.

Under the governor's leadership, the New Mexico Environment Department worked closely with the Air Force to develop interdisciplinary technical working groups to address and provide solutions to the contamination.

These combined efforts have led to the Air Force beginning to pump and treat water, with the first well capable of extracting more than 100 gallons per minute. The extracted water is piped to a filtration system, then used to irrigate Kirtland's golf course on base.

"Thanks to the Governor's leadership, this treatment system marks an important milestone in this long-overdue process," NMED Cabinet Secretary Ryan Flynn said. "While there is still much work to be done, we're pleased to see this progress on cleaning up this spill. We'll continue to do all we can to protect New Mexico's water supply for future generations."