



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270 – 2002

Office of the Regional Administrator

August 6, 2019

Hon. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor of New Mexico
490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

James C. Kenney
Cabinet Secretary
1190 Saint Frances Drive, PO Box 5469
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Governor Lujan Grisham and Secretary Kenney,

This responds to your letter to Administrator Wheeler, dated August 2, 2019, criticizing the level of assistance EPA has provided to the State of New Mexico regarding PFAS contamination near Cannon and Holloman Air Force Bases. As the Regional Administrator for EPA Region 6, I am responding on behalf of the Administrator.

Since PFAS contamination was discovered in New Mexico, we have worked with the State to provide technical and other expert assistance to provide for the protection of public health and the environment. Our efforts to address PFAS have been in partnership with the State of New Mexico and its career professionals who have worked with us to ensure that we are operating using science that is credible and would withstand scrutiny. In fact, later this week technical teams from EPA and the State are scheduled to meet to continue our important work. This is a crucial next step in our progress to address PFAS contamination in New Mexico and formulate our shared approach to addressing it.

If the State has not found our assistance useful, that has not been communicated as we have worked jointly on this issue. In fact, we are currently working with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to further evaluate site conditions, identify data gaps, and perform modeling in areas where we believe there is contamination. It was our understanding that NMED supports these activities and believes these steps will provide valuable information to the State as well as to its citizens potentially impacted by PFAS. While we understand New Mexico is engaged in litigation, the work that we jointly agreed would be useful in addressing this matter should not be disparaged.

At EPA, we continue to remain focused on helping the State by providing technical assistance, as well as scientific expertise to protect human health and the environment. It is important that public officials not allow short-term litigation posturing to interfere with those goals, as it has the potential to miscommunicate to the public the truth of the federal-state collaboration. For many years the citizens of New Mexico have benefited from our cooperation and we look forward to continuing our shared success.

It is my hope that your letter does not indicate an intent that the State is no longer interested in the exchange of technical information and cooperation. New Mexico has always indicated that such exchanges were welcome and useful, and EPA is eager to continue to provide that assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ken McQueen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ken" being more prominent than the last name "McQueen".

Ken McQueen
Regional Administrator