

WQCC HEARING TOOLKIT



WHEN AND WHERE

- **Public comment hearings run June 8–18, 2026, every day at 1 PM**
- **In person:** NM State Capitol, 490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, Room 309
- **Virtually:** [Webex link](#) at [env.nm.gov](#) Events Calendar
- Comments are up to 3 minutes – in person or virtual
- **If you have trouble joining, visit the [NM Environment Dept. Events Calendar](#) for help**

WHY YOUR COMMENT MATTERS

Federal rollbacks have stripped clean water protections from most of New Mexico's rivers, streams, and wetlands. Senate Bill 21 (SB 21) created a state permitting program to fill that gap, but only strong implementation rules will make those protections real. The Water Quality Control Commission is deciding those rules right now. **Weak rules would leave vulnerable waters, communities, and future generations at risk. Your 3 minute comment helps ensure New Mexico adopts strong, enforceable protections for our limited and irreplaceable water resources.**

SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

*"I urge the Commission to adopt strong, comprehensive, and enforceable rules that fully implement SB 21 to protect New Mexico's waters from existing and future pollution. **[ADD YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION HERE – a river, community, or experience that makes clean water matter to you.]** The need for action is urgent. New Mexico cannot afford weak protections that jeopardize our limited water resources. I urge the Commission to adopt rules that protect all surface waters, meet or exceed lost federal protections, protect Tribal water quality standards, require meaningful avoidance of impacts before permits are issued, and ensure robust public participation. New Mexicans deserve clean, safe, and reliable water. **Please adopt strong clean water protections that ensure a healthy future for our communities.**"*

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KEY ASKS

Urge the Commission to adopt rules that:

- Protect all surface waters including rivers, streams, wetlands, and the smaller tributaries that feed them
- Meet or exceed lost federal protections, including the 404(b)(1) guidelines requiring avoidance, minimization, and compensation for impacts
- Require avoidance first, ensuring that applicants demonstrate that they've chosen the least environmentally damaging option before permits are issued
- Establish a 2:1 mitigation ratio, requiring that twice the size of the area be restored or created when wetlands are destroyed
- Meaningfully involve the NM Department of Wildlife in the permitting process
- Protect Tribal waters and deny permits that would violate downstream Tribal water quality standards
- Ensure public participation on all general permit notices of intent

TIPS FOR MAKING STRONG COMMENTS

- State your name and the community or area where you live
- Share a personal story: a river you fish, a wetland near your home, water your family depends on
- Keep it focused on one or two key points rather than a long list
- Use the sample language above and make it your own
- End with a clear ask: strong, enforceable rules that fully implement SB 21

Encourage your friends, family, and community to sign the petition to the WQCC [HERE](#). Sign up to speak at the hearing [HERE](#). Make sure you share about it on social media and tag [@nmwilderness on Instagram!](#)