

**Caballo Concerned Citizens • Amigos Bravos
Rio Valle Concerned Citizens • Citizens for Dairy Reform
Food & Water Watch • Rio Grand Chapter of the Sierra Club**

December 17, 2010

Governor-Elect Susana Martinez
State Capitol
300 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87501

RE: Environmental Coalition request for meeting about Dairy Rules

Dear Governor-Elect Martinez:

The Citizens' Coalition, composed of Caballo Concerned Citizens, Amigos Bravos, Rio Valle Concerned Citizens, Citizens for Dairy Reform, Rio Grand Chapter of the Sierra Club, and Food & Water Watch, requests a meeting with you and your staff to discuss the need for your support for the Dairy Rules, which were passed by the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) on December 15, 2010.

Comprising over 7,000 members across the state, our coalition of organizations works on behalf of the interests of all New Mexicans who are concerned about the environmental and public health impacts of industrial dairy pollution. We view such pollution as one of today's most pressing issues for New Mexico. We have expressed our concern through our active participation in the dairy rulemaking process for the past two years, including attendance in the stakeholder process and formal hearings on the proposed regulations.

The following facts are provided as foundation for our desire to meet with your office for discussion on the Dairy Rules:

- According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there are 325,000 mature cows on dairy operations in New Mexico;
- The average industrial dairy in the state has 2,400 cows, a higher average than any other state in the nation;
- Dairy cows in Chavez County alone produce as much waste as the human populations of Los Angeles and Philadelphia combined;
- The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has found sixty three percent (63%) of the dairies in New Mexico are operating in violation of existing regulations:
- Fifty seven percent (57%) of the facilities that NMED has evaluated have exceeded groundwater quality standards for nitrates.
- This number is alarming, particularly because ninety percent (90%) of New Mexico's population relies on groundwater for drinking water.

All of us want to see New Mexico's agricultural sector thrive and prosper. We can all agree that the dairy industry deserves fair and effective regulations. In fact, the industry asked for new regulations in the 2009 Legislature and now the WQCC passed the first set of comprehensive dairy regulations.

Our goal is to help you and your administration understand that the cost of dairy industry pollution should not be placed on small, economically challenged communities or on the state.

Many communities in New Mexico have already paid a high price for dairy pollution - from having to purchase bottled water because their wells are contaminated, to having to stay indoors and keep their windows closed because of odors and flies emanating from multi-million gallon waste ponds. The fact is, under the current regulatory framework, living near industrial dairies reduces New Mexican's property values. The peer-reviewed *Appraisal Journal* estimates that proximity to industrial livestock facilities can reduce a property's market value between fifty (50) and ninety (90) percent. The cost to New Mexico's citizens in groundwater contamination and diminished quality of life and property values can be reduced, and hopefully eliminated, through proper implementation and enforcement of fair and consistent dairy regulations.

The dairy rulemaking process over the past two years has allowed our coalition to see that the NMED is an agency staffed with intelligent and conscientious employees who have worked diligently with industry to craft a set of rules to provide a stable business environment and, at the same time, meet many of the citizens' concerns for protecting human health and the environment. Our coalition wants to assure that these efforts and the regulations that were crafted are properly implemented and enforced.

We would like to meet with you and your transition staff to discuss this issue and to identify where we are in agreement on regulating the dairy industry. Please contact Jerry Nivens of Caballo Concerned Citizens at the contact information below as soon as possible to arrange a meeting.

We look forward to an in-person discussion with you at your earliest convenience so that we can begin the process of developing a working relationship that will continue during your first term as Governor.

Sincerely:

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