



GARREY CARRUTHERS GOVERNOR
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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SECRETARY FOR HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

Commission on the Arizona Environment

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Many gathered here today know New Mexico Governor Garrey Carruthers, and I bring you greetings from the Governor and the State of New Mexico. I attended High School and Junior College at Safford, Arizona, so I am always eager to return to the State of Arizona and enjoy its beauty and friendly people. Our two states have a great deal of commonalities including similarities in socioeconomic, geography, life zones, ecological relationships and interest in environmental health and environmental quality. Perhaps New Mexicans have had greater dedication to environmental health as evidenced by the fact that New Mexico was the first state, in the early 1970s, to join in the Sierra Club vs EPA suit to compel EPA to interpret the Federal Clean Air Act to prevent significant deterioration. Arizona entered the same suit on the opposite side but the US Supreme Court eventually ruled to prevent significant deterioration.

The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division is one of five major components of the New Mexico Health and Environment Department. The Environmental Improvement Division was first created on my recommendation by the 1971 New Mexico Legislature. It has a direct organizational lineage to a number of predecessor organizations dating back to 1919 when New Mexico hired its first state sanitary engineer. The New Mexico Health and Environment Department is unusually comprehensive and includes a spectrum of programs administered by a number of agencies in most other states. Likewise, the Environmental Improvement Division, as a

component of the Health and Environment Department, is probably the most comprehensive State Environmental Health agency in the nation. This division is responsible for a wide variety of environmental health programs including air pollution control, water pollution control, water supply protection, solid waste management, liquid waste control, ground water quality, hazardous waste management, food protection, occupational health and safety, insect and rodent control, and radiation protection. It operates through seventeen field offices located throughout the state, has a staff of approximately 300, and operates on an budget of almost \$12 million.

The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division might more appropriately be termed the New Mexico Environmental Health Division inasmuch as each of the previously listed programs pursue a health goal as a minimum, although there may be other goals involving quality of life and environmental protection factors involved. The Environmental Improvement Division has a statutory goal of protecting this and future generations from adverse environmental health effects.

By having such a comprehensive environmental health organization, New Mexico has avoided the environmental health program fragmentation found in most other states. Such fragmentation results in duplication, gaps, confusion and ineffective utilization of limited financial resources.

Two citizen groups, the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board and the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission, promulgate standards and regulations which the Environmental Improvement Division administers. However, these boards do not supervise or administer the Environmental Improvement Division or its personnel which are responsible to the Secretary of the Health and Environment Department. New Mexico is challenged by many of the same environmental health issues as those in the State of Arizona, including various types of air pollutants, hazardous waste issues, surface and ground water pollution, leaching from sanitary landfills, etc. The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division tends to be an environmental health

management agency in the most comprehensive sense in that we utilize the term management to include regulation, consultation, enforcement, demonstration, training, research, public information, education of target groups, etc. We have learned that results are usually achieved more rapidly and permanently by working with polluters and taking legal action as a last resort. We have also been emphasizing the necessity of all our personnel being involved with appropriate citizen, business, trade, professional and industrial groups so that they may better understand and enhance compliance with environmental health standards and regulations.

Inasmuch as the Environmental Improvement Division and all its programs are public health oriented, we also recognize the importance of insuring that key personnel have a working knowledge of the basic public health sciences including environmental health programs as well as epidemiology, biostatistics and public health risk assessment science.

We do not tout our Environmental Improvement Division as the organizational model, but it is one model which has been widely acclaimed and which many other states have indicated their desire to emulate.