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News Release

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Facts Matter: CRRUA Clarifies Misrepresented Water Quality Claims

The following responses from the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA) clarify misrepresented claims by Empowerment Congress that CRRUA water is unsafe.

CRRUA's water is safe to consume. It is compliant with New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and Environment Protection Agency (EPA) safe drinking water standards.

The responses pertain to a list of demands Empowerment Congress [publicly circulated](#).

Demand 1: *Preventative Measures*: CRRUA must establish preventative and protective measures when an incident occurs that impacts water quality.

Response: CRRUA conducts daily monitoring and regularly scheduled testing. If a change in treatment is needed, the adjustment is made quickly in accordance with protocols and procedures initiated by CRRUA in partnership with NMED, with follow-up monitoring and testing at an NMED certified laboratory.

(Below is a single response applicable to Demand 2 and Demand 3)

Demand 2: *Arsenic Test Strips*: CRRUA must provide arsenic testing strips to all households, allowing residents to independently verify the safety of their water. These strips should be mailed directly to each home serviced by CRRUA.

Demand 3: *Clean Water Supply*: CRRUA must supply clean third-party water to residents for a minimum of six months to compensate for the contaminated water previously supplied, as well as during events and incidents where residents' water quality is impacted.

Response to Demand 2 & 3:

Under state law CRRUA is unable to either provide arsenic testing strips or third-party water to residents. Doing so would result in a violation of Article IX, Section 14 of the New Mexico Constitution, otherwise referred to as the "Anti-Donation Clause". This constitutional provision prohibits public entities from making donations using public funds to any person, association, or public or private corporation, either directly or indirectly, with limited exceptions. CRRUA has been informed that none of the exceptions to the Anti-Donation Clause apply to providing arsenic test strips or third-party water to residents.

Also, test strips contain hazardous materials that require proper handling. They are not intended for public use. For accurate results, NMED requires designated sample points where water samples must be collected for testing purposes.

In addition, CRRUA's water quality is compliant with NMED testing for arsenic at all four arsenic treatment facilities, and CRRUA has passed 22 arsenic tests since January 24, 2004, including

NMED's quarterly tests. CRRUA makes all test results available to the public via the CRRUA website, Facebook page and through local news media.

As such, CRRUA provides safe water to its customers as certified by both NMED and NMED certified laboratories. Water quality information is available in the 2023 Consumer Confidence Report released on June 30, 2024.

Demand 4: *Rate Increase Moratorium*: CRRUA must place a freeze on water rate increases for the next four years. This moratorium is crucial to relieve the financial burden on residents paying for unsafe water they cannot use and the cost of buying water which is safe for them to use.

Response: CRRUA's water is safe to consume. It is compliant with NMED and EPA safe drinking water standards. All four arsenic treatment facilities are NMED compliant, and CRRUA has passed 22 arsenic tests since January 24, 2004, including NMED's quarterly tests. CRRUA makes all test results available to the public via the CRRUA website, Facebook page and through local news media. As such, CRRUA provides safe water to its customers as certified by both NMED and NMED certified laboratories. Water quality information is available in the 2023 Consumer Confidence Report released on June 30, 2024.

Demand 5: *Accessible Public Meetings*: CRRUA must change the time of the regularly-scheduled CRRUA Board meetings to 5:30 PM on the second Monday of each month, so as to ensure these meetings remain open and accessible to community members.

Response: Conducting morning meetings is a standard practice for government agencies and a cost-effective way of maximizing limited staff availability and resources, especially for the size of the CRRUA organization. CRRUA board meetings are available on Zoom and provide a convenient way for participants to address the board without having to physically attend meetings.