

May 1, 2024

Sent by email.

Hon. Gabe Vasquez
United States Congress
1517 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Vasquez.

On behalf of the board of the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA) and me, our apologies for the delayed response to your letter to the board dated February 26, 2024, requesting information about CRRUA operations.

Thank you for your continued concern for the welfare of the customers in the service area and the operation of the utility. We at CRRUA are equally concerned. That is why we all have been working diligently, and literally non-stop, to get the utility fully operational and compliant with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in order to provide our customers a reliable source of safe drinking water.

We continue to monitor the water daily and conduct voluntary bi-monthly sampling of the water treatment facilities (NMED conducts quarterly sampling) to assure customers that we are meeting the requirements of the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act.

Since January of this year when we named Juan Calros Crosby interim executive director, we have made much progress in a short time:

- CRRUA has retained the professional services of a New Mexico Level 4 Certified Operator in Water and Wastewater. Level 4 is the state's highest certification.
- All four CRRUA arsenic treatment facilities are operational and functioning properly with additional technology upgrades coming.
- Arsenic water samples from all four of CRRUA's treatment facilities are below the EPA limit of 10 parts per billion (ppb.) CRRUA has now passed the last three arsenic water tests in a row, including the most recent quarterly test conducted by NMED on April 3, 2024. (Attached.)
- Improvements and upgrades to CRRUA facilities are ongoing. They include security enhancements and technology upgrades.
- Secured \$5 million of state legislative funding for Sunland Park Wastewater Treatment Plant rehabilitation.
- Continually seek to identify and secure available funding sources. We welcome any financial assistance you can provide Congressman Vasquez, as we have had to use reserve funds to pay for some of our infrastructure improvements.

CRRUA is now 56% compliant in correcting the 58 deficiencies identified by NMED in its 2023 Sanitary Survey of CRRUA. The attached checklist tracks our progress. (Attached.)

We continue to work closely with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED.) NMED Deputy Cabinet Secretary Sydney Lienemann and Division Director John Rhoderick, Water Protection Division, travelled to Sunland Park, NM on April 15, 2024, to meet with CRRUA administrative staff and city of Sunland Park officials. (Attached.)

We have improved customer communication by increasing the amount of timely, factual information we post on our website <https://www.crrua.org/> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/crruainfo>. This includes the latest arsenic test results, discolored water occurrences, water line breaks, progress checklist updates, infrastructure upgrades and other crucial information.

Since the majority of CRRUA customers are Spanish speaking, we provide information in both Spanish and English. Our goal is to make the website and Facebook page the primary source for immediate CRRUA information for customers, accessible 24/7.


CRRUA also created a YouTube channel to host informational videos. Currently, CRRUA has produced a video that gives an inside look at the arsenic removal process at one of CRRUA's treatment facilities. The video is available at: www.youtube.com/@crrua_info. A Spanish language version will be posted soon. CRRUA will also be acquiring a direct messaging system for immediate notifications to customers and will continue providing information to the news media.

To ensure infrastructure is up to date:

- \$440,000: Arsenic media filter replacement at Sunland Park and Santa Teresa Industrial Park arsenic treatment facilities. Estimated completion time is 11 to 14 weeks. CRRUA Board Approved.
- \$123,212: Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Upgrade for entire water system. This consists of 24/7 remote monitoring by computer/phone and operator call-out. CRRUA Board Approved.
- \$180,000: SCADA Lite for 34 lift stations.
- \$16,550: Tank & Dive inspection and sediment removal of Port of Entry and Airport water tanks.
- \$179,000: Replacement of water well #30 (a primary well) with a Boreline well system upgrade for an efficient pumping system.
- \$22,000: CCTV inspections of water well #14 that is inoperable and well #11 that is failing, to determine best methods of repair.
- \$345,676: Anapra – Calle Morocco Project. In conjunction with the City of Sunland Park, CRRUA has contributed funding for the water infrastructure portion of the project that will provide for the upgrades needed to supply the Anapra community with fire protection where there were no previous fire hydrants.
- \$238,000: Replacement of aging and unreliable electrical panel system and WAS/RAS sludge pumps at Sunland Park Wastewater Treatment Facility.
- \$42,000: Replacement of the outdated and unreliable vacuum station pumps in the Riverside subdivision. The vacuum station fails multiple times per year creating manhole sewage spills that subject residents in the proximity of the spill to unpleasant odors.

I hope you find this information helpful. We welcome an opportunity to meet with you in person and if possible, to provide you with a tour of one of our arsenic treatment facilities and speak with our team of experts.

Sincerely,


Susana Chaparro (May 2, 2024 07:20 MDT)

Susana Chaparro
Board Chair
Camino Real Regional Utility Authority