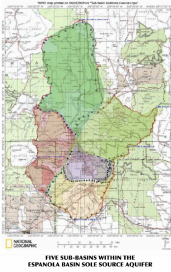


PROTECTING THE ESPAÑOLA BASIN SOLE SOURCE AQUIFER

New Mexico Legislative Interim Committee — One-Page Briefing



WHY THIS MATTERS

EPA designated the Española Basin Sole Source Aquifer (EBSSA) under Safe Drinking Water Act §1424(e) in 2008. The basin spans more than 3,000 square miles and includes five interconnected sub-basins. Pueblos, the City of Española, rural mutual domestic systems, northern Santa Fe County communities, and portions of Los Alamos County depend on the basin. The designation reflects the lack of a reasonably available alternative drinking-water source.

THE CHROMIUM PROBLEM

In November 2025, NMED reported hexavalent chromium in the regional aquifer beneath Pueblo de San Ildefonso and ordered injection operations under LANL Discharge Permit DP-1835 stopped. The event raises immediate needs for independent monitoring, updated plume and hydrogeologic modeling, transparent data, and drinking-water contingency planning.

WHAT SOLE SOURCE DESIGNATION DOES — AND DOES NOT DO

SSA designation provides a federal review mechanism for qualifying federally financially assisted projects that may contaminate a designated aquifer and can support protective conditions in that review.

It does not automatically create cleanup funding, replace DOE's LANL cleanup responsibility, or finance local drinking-water infrastructure.

THREE FUNDING RAILS

Need

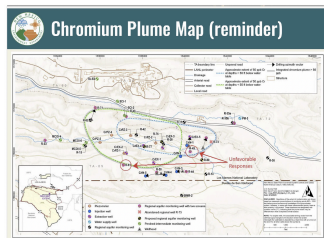
LANL cleanup
Drinking-water protection
SSA protection capacity

Primary Funding / Authority

DOE Environmental Management
DWSRF, tribal programs, state/federal infrastructure
EPA / Congressional appropriations

Purpose

Contain and remediate chromium
Monitoring, treatment, redundancy
Restore mitigation and protection capacity



FY2027 FEDERAL REQUEST — SUBMITTED MARCH 9, 2026

\$25 million national Sole Source Aquifer protection/mitigation request submitted to Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández for Interior–Environment appropriations.

Submitted language includes a proposed \$5 million tribal set-aside, an EBSSA-focused allocation, EPA report language on EBSSA resource needs, and separate DOE corrective-action language.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION REQUESTED FROM FEDERAL DESIGNATION TO FUNDED PROTECTION

Support the FY27 programmatic request submitted through Rep. Leger Fernández's office to restore Sole Source Aquifer mitigation/protection funding.

Support the Española Basin monitoring and infrastructure funding request for Pueblo, municipal, and regional early-warning capacity.

Support full federal funding and accountability for containment and cleanup of the LANL chromium plume.

KEY MESSAGE: The Española Basin remains a federally designated Sole Source Aquifer. Our task now is to secure the funding, monitoring, infrastructure, and cleanup resources necessary to protect the drinking water that designation recognizes as irreplaceable. **Monitoring, cleanup, and drinking-water resilience must move together before contamination reaches community supply wells.**

Elaine Cimino • Common Ground Rising • Co-Petitioner, Española Basin Sole Source Aquifer Designation

Source basis: EBSSA community presentation and congressional briefing binder; CCNS chromium-plume materials.