

Donald Kurtz

It is very important that NMED protect the residents of Southern NM, West Texas and Northern Chihuahua from harmful emissions, including nitrogen oxides. First, in terms of process, there should be a public hearing on the Yucca permit, which is being requested for the largest energy infrastructure project in New Mexico history. If the process allows for a public hearing the question becomes: if not now for a full NMED public hearing on a state permit, when? Second, it concerns me that this plant is being built in, or very close to, an EPA-designated ozone non-attainment area. Ozone plays a significant role in residents developing asthma, especially children. A new outpouring of nitrogen oxides into an area that already struggles with ozone attainment would lead a significant increase in asthma attacks, more emergency room visits, and reduced lung function on high-ozone days, all of which would disproportionately affect children, older adults and people with existing respiratory disease. On a personal note, I have been hiking in Doña Ana County for almost fifty years. I have seen first hand the steadily worsening layer of smog that covers the southern New Mexico landscape on almost all days of the year. Our clear skies and beautiful landscape are a significant part of New Mexico's appeal for residents and visitors alike, and I'm concerned that Jupiter will continue the deepening degradation of this shared legacy. Please act diligently in the public interest in all areas where NMED has been given that statutory responsibility.