



March 6, 2025

Brent Larsen
Permitting Section Manager
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA),
Region 6 (WDPE)
1201 Elm Street
Dallas, TX 75270
214-665-7523
Larsen.Brent@epa.gov

Mayor Louie Bonaguidi
110 W Aztec Ave.
Gallup, NM 87301
505-863-1220
Mayor@GallupNM.gov

Re: No Antidegradation Analysis Required; City of Gallup Wastewater Treatment Plant; NPDES Permit No. NM0020672; Permit Renewal Application

Dear Brent Larsen and Mayor Louie Bonaguidi:

Water quality standards include a framework and methodology known as “antidegradation” for deciding if, when, and how water quality may be degraded. Antidegradation applies to all activities with the potential to adversely affect water quality or existing uses or designated uses, including any new point source discharges. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), acting under authority delegated by the Water Quality Control Commission, implements water quality standards in the State of New Mexico, including the antidegradation policy and implementation plan. As such, NMED “requires the highest and best degree of wastewater treatment practicable and commensurate with protecting and maintaining the designated uses and existing water quality” [20.6.4.8(B) New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC)].

The City of Gallup Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) applied to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to renew their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) point source discharge permit number NM0020672. However, the City of Gallup submitted the renewal application late, which triggered this review. In their application, the City of Gallup did not identify any changes to the wastewater treatment processes, design flow, or discharge location, but they did identify scheduled improvements for the WWTP, which included ongoing maintenance, repair, and capital improvements to the collections system.

The Gallup WWTP discharges to Puerco River in the Upper Puerco watershed (HUC 15020006). The Puerco River is a perennial stream with designated uses of warmwater aquatic life, livestock watering, wildlife habitat, and primary contact. The aquatic life use in the Puerco River is impaired due to total ammonia and the primary contact use is impaired due to E. coli bacteria.

Antidegradation applies to all activities with the potential to adversely affect water quality or existing or designated uses, including:

- Any proposed new or increased point source or nonpoint source discharge of pollutants that would lower water quality or affect the existing or designated uses.
- Any proposed increase in pollutant loadings to a waterbody when the proposal is associated with existing activities.

- Any increase in flow alteration over an existing alteration.
- Any hydrologic modifications, such as dam construction and water withdrawals.

In general, NMED's *Antidegradation Policy Implementation Procedure for Regulated Activities* applies to every proposal for a new or increased permitted discharge of a pollutant to the State's surface waters. The City of Gallup is requesting to renew their existing NPDES permit and is not proposing a new or increased discharge. As a result, NMED evaluated whether there were any changes in water quality standards since the last permit renewal, if there were any changes in baseline water quality of the receiving stream or downstream waters, and if there were any changes in permit conditions since the last permit.

As a result of this review, NMED concludes that there are no new or increased water quality impacts resulting from the discharge since there are no changes from the previous permit; therefore, no antidegradation review is required.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Susan A. Lucas-Kamat, SWQB Point Source Regulation Program Manager, at 505-946-8924 or susan.lucaskamat@env.nm.gov.

Sincerely,

Shelly Lemon Digitally signed by Shelly Lemon
Date: 2025.03.06 12:37:50 -07'00'

Shelly Lemon, Bureau Chief
Surface Water Quality Bureau

cc: Curry Jones, USEPA (6WDPE) via email Jones.Curry@epa.gov
Tung Nguyen, USEPA (6WDPE) via email Nguyen.Tung@epa.gov
Roberto Bernier, USEPA (6ECD-WM) via email Bernier.Roberto@epa.gov
Rachel Matthews, USEPA via email Matthews.Rachel@empa.gov
Susan A. Lucas Kamat, NMED SWQB Point Source Program Manager, via email,
Susan.LucasKamat@env.nm.gov
Jason Martinez, NMED SWQB Point Source Permit Team, via email Jason.Martinez2@env.nm.gov
Mauricio Tarazona, NMED SWQB Point Source Municipal and Industrial Specialist, via email
Mauricio.Tarazona@env.nm.gov
Nafis Fuad, NMED SWQB Point Source Compliance Team Lead, via email Nafis.Fuad@env.nm.gov
Jan Darrel Boone, City of Gallup Superintendent Water/Wastewater Operations, via email
jboone@gallupnm.gov
Robert "Redd" Gashytewa Jr., Gallup Project Manager, Jacobs via email
[redd.gashytewa@jacobs.com](mailto:redgashytewa@jacobs.com)

CITATIONS: 20.6.4.8 NMAC Antidegradation Policy and Implementation Plan
20.6.4.99 NMAC Perennial Waters
Statewide Water Quality Management Plan and Continuing Planning Process (WQMP/CPP)
WQMP/CPP – Appendix A: Antidegradation Policy Implementation Procedure
2024-2026 State of New Mexico Clean Water Act §303(d)/§305(b) Integrated Report