

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AGENCY
P.O. Box 2348, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501**

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

December 1, 1971

**Mr. William C. Simms
Director
Department of Development
113 Washington Avenue
Santa Fe, NM 87501**

Dear Mr. Simms:

In accordance with your request of November 18, 1971, we offer the following position paper on behalf of the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Agency:

- 1) New Mexico's quality environment is its prime asset.**
- 2) New Mexico is one of the few areas of this Nation which still has options open to determine its own future and the type of environment desired by this and future generations of New Mexicans.**
- 3) New Mexico and the Southwestern United States have a very delicate ecological balance. It may be very difficult, if not impossible, to restore a given environmental situation once it is damaged or degraded. Therefore, regulations adopted for the purpose of environmental control must be preventive in nature.**
- 4) All New Mexicans should strive to create a viable economy and jobs for New Mexicans without harming our prime asset, our environment.**
- 5) Environmental quality is more than the currently popular air-water-wastes syndrome, and reaches to such matter as congestion, transportation, visibility, open spaces, and pressures on recreational areas.**
- 6) We know of no studies which indicate that increases in population and attraction of more and more industry lead to an improved economy and quality of life. To the contrary, we have only to look at the populous industrialized areas of the Nation to observe that such growth leads to decreased quality of life, increased cost of living, increased social problems, and increased taxes. Therefore, at this period in our history, there is no doubt but that environmental quality is closely related to population levels and population growth beyond a certain optimal population is not compatible with a quality environment or a viable economy. New Mexico should not and can not serve as a haven from congestion and**

- pollution for those from other areas of the Nation, as it will only serve to eventually destroy our prime attraction and prime asset.**
- 7) The competing demand for limited tax funds to support public agencies is tremendous in all states and at all levels of government. A number of agencies, boards and commissions are already involved in the struggle to retain or regain New Mexico's quality environment. These include the Environmental Improvement Agency and the Environmental Improvement Board, the New Mexico University Board of Regents, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, the Office of the State Engineer, Department of Game and Fish, Parks and Recreation Department, New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission, and the Environmental Quality Council. Fragmentation or proliferation of environmental or ecological responsibilities and programs only serve to confuse the public and place further stresses on an already over-burdened state tax structure. All environmental factors such as air, water, wastes, food, environmental chemicals, water supply. etc. are inextricably interdigitated both in ecological and program management sense. Therefore, they are most effectively and efficiently managed within a single, or at least limited number of agencies.**
 - 8) We have no doubt that man can survive in a grossly polluted environment; however, man should thrive rather than merely survive. Therefore, environmental quality controls in New Mexico should be predicated on retaining our environmental quality rather than on mere health standards.**
 - 9) It has been repeatedly shown that technology does not advance or improve control methods until forced to do so by legal requirements. Therefore, environmental quality controls should be based on the needs of protecting man in the environment rather than on the latest limits of technology.**
 - 10) All men must live in the environment and are supported by the life processes obtained from the earth. Therefore, environmental quality controls should be administered by an agency having a prime mission of public service and consumer protection rather than by an agency having a mission of protecting or promoting any given industry.**
 - 11) Federal standards have been promulgated for the needs of over-populated industrialized areas which do not have the options available to New Mexico and New Mexicans. Therefore, for the most part, adherence to current proposed federal pollution standards would allow a drastic degradation of New Mexico's relatively high level environment.**
 - 12) All persons engaged in the business of promoting a viable economy should be well informed of the delicate ecological balance of New Mexico's environment and her environmental control regulations in order that time, materials, effort and money are not inappropriately invested. The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Agency stands ready to discuss environmental quality issues or consult with any**

person or firm regarding compliance with established environmental quality standards and regulations.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to offer the foregoing position paper regarding New Mexico's environment.

Very sincerely,

**Larry J. Gordon
Director**

LJG: nl

**cc: Governor Bruce King
Richard W. Heim, Dir. HISS
NM Environmental Improvement Board
NM Environmental Quality Council**