
NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT 4 COMMISSIONER LYNDA LOVEJOY

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NEWS RELEASE

Bench Request Issued by Commissioner Lovejoy Brings Closure to Challenging Water Case

SANTA FE – Following the official closure of the transfer of operations of the Harvest Gold water system earlier this month, Commissioner Lynda Lovejoy issued a bench request to finalize and tie up loose ends of the transfer agreement, ultimately bringing a satisfactory conclusion before the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission on Wednesday, October 18, 2017.

“This represents one of the most challenging water projects I have ever dealt with,” Commissioner Lovejoy stated in reference to the saga surrounding the troubled, privately owned AV Water Company LLC.

The transfer marks an end to the many operational difficulties experienced by AV Water’s customers living in the Harvest Gold subdivision east of Bloomfield, who were under a boil water advisory for a staggeringly long time – more than one year – due to turbidity issues.

During the year-plus period that the boil water advisory was in place, Harvest Gold residents depended on water deliveries and at times had to haul water to their homes in order to have clean water for grooming, bathing, cooking, and drinking – all things that most people do without thought and take for granted.

“If it were not for the Bloomfield city administration stepping forward to build the interconnection, and the residents of Harvest Gold stepping forward to form the Apple Orchard Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association, this latest development never would have happened,” Lovejoy stated.

The age and poor condition of Harvest Gold’s water treatment plant and primary storage tank, the financial condition of AV Water Company, and the funding amount needed in order to upgrade the treatment plant were just some of the obstacles to overcome before residents of the Harvest Gold subdivision – with the assistance of the New Mexico Environmental Department – formed the Apple Orchard Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association.

In doing so, the group applied and received \$180,000 from the New Mexico State Board of Finance to construct a connection between the City of Bloomfield and the subdivision that would deliver clean potable water.

“This could not have been accomplished without the tireless work performed by the San Juan County Commission, County Manager and Emergency Management Office,” Lovejoy added. “They went above and beyond by way of administrative decisions and enacting emergency water delivery measures.”

Previously authorized Capital Outlay funds were reauthorized by the New Mexico State Legislature in the amount of \$500,000 to help improve Harvest Gold’s infrastructure.

Despite the many obstacles and issues stemming from AV Water’s problematic service to Harvest Gold, Lovejoy and her fellow Commissioners stayed focused month after month, determined to develop solutions that ultimately led to the City of Bloomfield utilizing monies provided by the State to build an interconnecting water line between the city’s water system and the subdivision’s infrastructure.

“There are so many actions that were crucial, especially because this situation lasted far too long for these New Mexicans, and it really did take many different entities and personalities coming together and working together with a common goal in mind,” Lovejoy stated. “I think we learned a lot in this process.”

Some electrical work and flushing out of the system is expected to take place in a matter of days, according to an attorney representing the mutual domestic water association, speaking on the interconnect linking Harvest Gold to the City of Bloomfield’s water system.

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