

Hearing set for transfer of Harvest Gold water system

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PRC may approve the transfer agreement after the hearing Wednesday in Santa Fe



New Mexico Public Regulation Commission members Valerie Espinoza, left, Sandy Jones and Karen Montoya inspect sludge gathered from AV Water Company customer Roberta DeField Oct. 12, during a hearing at the San Juan County Administration Building in Aztec.

DAILY TIMES FILE PHOTO

FARMINGTON – The AV Water Company filed an application with the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission this morning to transfer its [Harvest Gold water system assets](#) to the [Apple Orchard Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association](#).

After receiving the application shortly after 9:30 a.m., today, the PRC voted to have a transfer hearing during its meeting next week. The meeting starts at 9:30 a.m.,

Wednesday at 1120 Paseo de Peralta in Santa Fe. Following the hearing, the PRC may choose to approve the transfer. PRC meetings are streamed live online at nmprc.state.nm.us.

Miriam Browning, a Harvest Gold resident, said she was disappointed that the hearing will be held in Santa Fe, but the location will not prevent her from attending.

“I’m most definitely going to be there,” she said.

Once the transfer has taken place, Apple Orchard and the City of Bloomfield will use state funds to connect the water system in the Harvest Gold subdivision to the city infrastructure. The Harvest Gold subdivision has been on a boil-water advisory for more than a year, and the new connection has been identified as the best solution for getting clean water to residents.

Apple Orchard will also be eligible to use state capital outlay funds, which will be available this fall, to repair the system.

Apple Orchard is a community-based entity. Property owners in Harvest Gold will pay membership fees, which will give them a vote in Apple Orchard board elections.

Browning is one of the residents who did not support the formation of the mutual domestic, although she attends the weekly meetings.

“I was never OK with this mutual domestic, and I don’t like the fact that we’re going to lose the PRC,” she said, referring to the fact that, once the transfer takes place, the PRC will no longer regulate the Harvest Gold water system.

While the PRC usually provides 20 days’ notice for hearings, it expedited the transfer hearing.

“I see no reason to wait,” Commissioner Cynthia Hall said.

Due to the short timeframe, AV Water agreed to hand deliver notices to each residence in Harvest Gold.

“I think we owe it to the Harvest Gold residents to get clean drinking water,” Commissioner Lynda Lovejoy said. “Because construction is going to take some time. We can’t go into another winter without these folks getting clean drinking water.”

Hannah Grover covers government for The Daily Times. She can be reached at 505-564-4652.