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New Mexico Considers Produced Water Recycling

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(http://vertassets.blob.core.windows.net/image/aefc7e6a/aefc7e6a-83d0-4795-bcc3-4a7eba6c6278/newmexico_reg_1_.jpg)

State regulators in New Mexico are weighing a new rule that would make it permissible to reuse drilling wastewater.

The aim is to reduce the amount of freshwater that the drilling industry requires, according to (<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/oct/22/new-mexico-rule-changing-fracking-water-reuse-eyed/#ixzz3IJ8oQlAC>) the Associated Press. The New Mexico Environment Department and the Oil Conservation Commission (OCC) are working on the rule, the report said.

"Currently, state rules don't allow water to be reused because of environmental concerns that it may contaminate freshwater supplies," the AP reported.

Dave Martin, secretary of the Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department, explained (<http://www.hobbsnews.com/>) the regulatory effort to the *Hobbs News-Sun*.

"I had a local producer in Hobbs tell me we need to get away from fresh water," Martin said. "The economics on reusing produced water is right in there with using fresh water. Historically, produced water has been viewed pretty much as waste, but we want to get away from disposing of it and instead make it an asset."

The rule is expected to be released in the coming weeks. "It has been worked on for several months now," Martin said. "Once it is finalized, it will go to OCC, and we are expecting that will probably happen...no later than November."

Texas already has a rule that allows drilling and fracking wastewater to be reused. New Mexico officials consulted with Texas experts as they considered the best approach.

"New Mexico is in a very exciting time in its regulatory environment. It is poised for great things. With it comes the economic boom and the hurdles, one of those is water and there has been a great deal of attention in Texas because of the drought," said John Tintera, president of the Texas Water Recycling Commission, who met with New Mexico officials. In Texas, the shift to recycling fracking wastewater has been a slow but widening trend in the energy industry.

"With a years-long drought depleting water supplies across prime drilling areas in South and West Texas, pressure on oil and gas companies has been ramping up. Early indications are the industry is slowly turning toward recycling its own wastewater, along with highly salty and undrinkable brackish water, to curb the strain of the hydraulic fracturing boom," the *Dallas Morning News* reported (<http://www.dallasnews.com/business/energy/20140809-fracking-companies-begin-slow-shift-to-recycling-wastewater.ece>).

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