

Bernalillo County Commission  
Observer Report  
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### **Kirtland Pollution Plume is Imminent Threat to City Drinking Water**

The Bernalillo County Commission has heard an alarming report from the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority. The report concerns a pollution plume from the Kirtland Air Force Base that is spreading through the east side of the city.

The plume is less than one mile from the city's most productive and highest quality water wells. The primary pollutant concerning the water authority is Ethylene Dibromide, an additive used in gasoline and used as an insect repellent in agriculture. The chemical causes cancer to humans and has been proven to make male agricultural workers sterile.

The pollution plume was first discovered leaking from a refueling area of the air base in the mid-1970s. Decades of dispute between the air force and the state environment department, which is responsible for supervising the cleanup of the plume, has allowed the pollution to spread to a place where it threatens the city's water supply.

The air force has been granted 16 extensions over the years as it tried to characterize the extent and density of the chemical contamination. The investigation is still in the primary stages, and there is no cleanup effort in place to try to remediate the problem.

The water authority is asking for official and citizen help to force the air force to begin actual cleanup activities. They are also seeking guaranteed funding for cleanup until the site closes and continued support to ensure oversight from the New Mexico Environment Department.

The commission took no action on the report.

**League of Women Voters of NM Position: Minimize water contamination in order to promote the health and safety of all life.**