



NEWS RELEASE **For Immediate Release**

October 7, 2025

Contact: Jorge Estrada, Public Relations Coordinator
New Mexico Environment Department
505.690.5326 | george.estrada@env.nm.gov

The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

Toxic algae detected in Clayton Lake *NMED warns visitors not to swim and to keep pets away*

UNION COUNTY — The New Mexico Environment Department is warning visitors to avoid water contact at Clayton Lake after samples confirmed the presence of harmful algae and toxins.

Harmful algae blooms, or HABs, occur when certain types of algae grow excessively in water, posing potential health risks to people and animals. HABs can appear blue, bright green, brown or red and may resemble scum or floating grass clippings on the water's surface. These blooms can produce toxins that are harmful to humans and animals.

Samples collected by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) show the presence of harmful algae and toxins in Clayton Lake. NMED advises visitors to take the following precautions:

- Do not drink untreated surface water.
- Do not swim, wade, paddleboard or water ski.
- Do not bring dogs or other animals to the lake or hiking areas along the shoreline.
- Avoid areas of algae when boating.
- Stay away from algae deposited on the shoreline.
- Rinse fish with clean water before cooking thoroughly and eat only the fillet portion.
- Supervise children and prevent them from entering the lake or playing near algae on the shoreline.
- If you suspect an algae-related illness, call the New Mexico Poison Information Center at 800-222-1222. For animal illness, call 888-426-4435 or the Pet Poison Helpline at 855-764-7661.

NMED continues to actively monitor lake conditions as resources allow. The department reminds the public: if the water smells bad or looks scummy—like grass clippings floating on the surface, thick like paint, or pea-green, blue-green or brownish red in color—it's best to stay out. When in doubt, stay out.

More information about HABs can be found on [NMED's HABs webpage](#), the New Mexico Department of Health's [human and animal health](#) factsheets, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's ["Fishing During HABs"](#) webpage.

###

NMED does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age or sex in the administration of its programs or activities, as required by applicable laws and regulations. NMED is responsible for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning non-discrimination requirements implemented by 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972. If you have any questions about this notice or any of NMED's non-discrimination programs, policies or procedures, you may contact: Kate Cardenas, Non-Discrimination Coordinator | NMED | 1190 St. Francis Dr., Suite N4050 | P.O. Box 5469 | Santa Fe, NM 87502 or (505) 827-2855 or nd.coordinator@env.nm.gov. If you believe that you have been discriminated against with respect to a NMED program or activity, you may contact the Non-Discrimination Coordinator.