



Office of the Governor

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

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Governor Lujan Grisham announces completion of Carlsbad brine well remediation project

CARLSBAD – Today, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced the successful completion of the Carlsbad Brine Well Remediation Project alongside city and county leaders in Carlsbad.

The announcement marks the conclusion of a years-long effort to address an unstable cavity created by fracking operations aimed at producing saturated brine for use in oil and gas operations. The state took charge of remediation for the project after brine well operators I&W Inc. filed for bankruptcy in 2010.

“This is what good, collaborative government in action looks like,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “The team we assembled has successfully protected infrastructure in Carlsbad that is critical to our state’s economy, local groundwater, and the community. I am grateful for the work of all of our partners to get this project completed.”

The State of New Mexico invested more than \$80 million into the project, \$67.4 of which was invested by Gov. Lujan Grisham’s administration via the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, the Department of Transportation, and the Environment Department. An additional \$12.6 was contributed to the project by Eddy County and the City of Carlsbad.

“This project would not be completed today without the leadership of Gov. Lujan Grisham and the state’s collaboration with the legislature, city and county,” said EMNRD Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “While it is unfortunate that the state had to step in, I am incredibly proud of the way we executed the project by coming up with novel remediation strategies to stabilize both the northern and southern voids while minimizing interruptions to surface activities and without any serious safety incidents for those working on site.”

“This challenge was incredibly complex and it took so many individuals and groups pulling in the same direction to get this project done – and we did,” said Eddy County Manager Allen Davis. “I am grateful for the perseverance of our local elected officials, and thank Gov. Lujan Grisham and state and local

partners who made this a reality.”

“The effort to remediate the brine well seemed like an impossible task on numerous occasions, and it took years of hard work and dedication to get to this point,” said Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway. “We’re very glad that this issue appears to be safely resolved, and we thank all of our elected officials, from both parties and across the state, for their commitment toward protecting New Mexico’s residents.”

Many Carlsbad residents dedicated hundreds of hours toward this project, and they worked closely with the state and its contractors. The state sincerely appreciates their commitment toward resolving this issue.

While the southern portion of the void was successfully stabilized in November 2019 with high-mobility grout, the larger northern portion of the cavity presented a greater challenge. Crews added more than 170,000 cubic yards of sand this February, filling a large portion of the remaining void.

The state will invest \$1.4 million in remaining project funds toward the installation of a monitoring system and support for two years following project completion to ensure that the area remains stable.

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