

020320 - Kirtland Air Force Base Jet Fuel Spill

LOCATION: Albuquerque, NM

INITIATION DATE: November 2015

CLIENTS/PARTNERS: SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP), New Mexico Voices for Children, State Senator Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, State Senator Mimi Stewart, State Representative Andres Romero, and three individuals

OPPOSING PARTIES: U.S. Air Force, U.S. Department of Defense

STATUS: Ongoing

ATTORNEYS: Douglas Meiklejohn, Charles de Saillan, Jon Block

SUMMARY:

A fuel spill bigger than the Valdez oil spill – but underground. An estimated 24 million gallons of jet fuel is migrating through Albuquerque’s aquifer towards one of the City’s biggest drinking water well fields. The Air Force ignored indications as far back as the early 1980s that there might be a problem with its underground fuel system until 1999, when it became painfully obvious. After 20 years, the Air Force has yet to fully delineate the plume of groundwater contamination and a final remedy has neither been evaluated nor implemented. There is no written work plan for completing the investigation or implementing cleanup of the groundwater contamination and no written schedule or enforceable milestone deadlines for doing so ...if we are not successful in winning speedier, more effective cleanup, there may be no urgency until drinking water wells start becoming contaminated.

LATEST NEWS:

02/03/2020 – Our clients filed a [Complaint against the U.S. Air Force and the Department of Defense](#). Following our Notice of Intent to Sue in May 2019, we began discussions with the Air Force and sent them a draft consent decree, containing a cleanup schedule and potential penalties for failure to meet cleanup milestones. After the Air Force failed to respond to the draft consent decree, our clients filed the Complaint. Read our [Press Release](#).

05/31/2019 – Our clients sent a Notice of intent to sue letter to the Air Force and Department of Defense over the failure to implement productive measures toward cleaning up the massive Kirtland Jet Fuel Spill. We sent out a [press release](#); both the [Albuquerque Journal](#) and the [Santa Fe New Mexican](#) picked up a story written by the Associated Press about the Notice of intent to sue

11/13/2015 – The NMELC has filed a notice of intent to sue with the US Air Force, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Secretary of Defense and the New Mexico Attorney General over the failure to implement productive measures toward cleaning up the massive Kirtland Jet Fuel Spill. [Notice of Intent to Sue](#)