

## **Trump water rule has Monday deadline for comment**

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The public has until Monday (April 15) to make their voices heard on a new rule being proposed by the Trump administration that would change which rivers and streams are protected under certain federal laws.

The proposed rule would replace a 2015 definition of “waters of the United States,” which was developed during the Obama administration under the Clean Water Act. The 2015 definition expanded the waterways eligible for federal protections to include ephemeral streams, or those that only flow when snow melts or rain falls.

The new rule would remove ephemeral streams and wetlands that don’t have an aboveground connection to a body of water, two types of waterways that are prevalent throughout Taos County and vital to the region’s watershed.

“We are very concerned that the proposed rule, if adopted, would have serious detrimental consequence on water quality in New Mexico and through the country,” read a letter from Amigos Bravos, a nonprofit, Taos-based water advocacy organization.

“We strongly oppose many elements of the proposed rule, which would eliminate Clean Water Act protections for a large portion of New Mexico’s surface waters and wetlands.

The state environment department estimated that 96 percent of New Mexico’s surface waters would be left unprotected, said Rachel Conn of Amigos Bravos.