JUN 26 2014

Mr. Abraham Franklin
Watershed Protection Section
Surface Water Quality Bureau
New Mexico Environmental Department
1190 St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87502

Dear Mr. Franklin:

We have completed our review of the second draft of the Paso del Norte Watershed-Based Plan (WBP). This WBP addresses the Environmental Protection Agency's nine key elements for Section 319 funding. This version of the plan, dated May 19, 2014, addresses EPA's comments on the initial WBP received in September, 2013. This WBP is designed to address water quality impairments in the Paso del Norte Watershed by reducing bacterial pollution in the Rio Grande.

EPA greatly appreciates the work of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council and the New Mexico Environmental Department to prepare this WBP. EPA also appreciates the thorough and timely manner in which our original comments were addressed. This plan will provide sufficient information to implement the 2007 TMDL for the main stem of the Rio Grande and will provide a living document and framework to effectively address other sources of nonpoint source pollution in the watershed if additional impairments are identified in the future. We are pleased to inform you that we consider this plan to be in compliance with EPA national guidance. We expect that this living document will be refined as data collection for additional stream segments continues and milestone reviews determine implementation progress and effectiveness.

Based on our acceptance of the WBP, the State of New Mexico is now eligible for CWA Section 319 funding for watershed implementation projects consistent with this WBP and the Surface Water Quality Bureau's Nonpoint Source Management Plan. If you or your staff have any questions regarding our review, please contact me at 214-665-7286.

Sincerely,

Brian E. Fontenot, Ph.D.
Nonpoint Source Program Manager
Ecosystems Protection Branch

cc: James Hogan, NMED