



New Mexico Environment Department

SCIENCE | INNOVATION | COLLABORATION | COMPLIANCE

Uranium Reclamation Strategic Plan

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is releasing the Uranium Reclamation Strategic Plan to lead 11 state agencies in addressing the environmental impacts of legacy uranium mining.

The plan's main goals address:

- Identifying and cleaning up abandoned uranium mines
- Developing a workforce and sustainable funding sources for long-term stewardship



The 2022 Uranium Mine Cleanup bill, [House Bill 164](#), spurred this effort to address gaps in the regulatory framework for neglected Abandoned Uranium Mines (AUMs) and protect public health. The Legislature also provided some funding to support NMED and other agency staff to do some of this work. However, continued reclamation efforts require sustainable funding at higher levels (i.e., millions of dollars annually), a dedicated workforce, and a coordinated approach to protect health and the environment. NMED leads HB164 implementation, but the success of these cleanup efforts depends on collaborative partnerships with federal, state, and private stakeholders.

New Mexico has 261 abandoned uranium mines. An estimated 50 of these sites, located across state, federal, and private lands, are considered "neglected" and lack funding for cleanup. Current federal funding is insufficient for the scale and complexity of this challenge, which requires unique protective measures, licensed specialized waste repositories, and long-term maintenance due to the presence of radioactive materials, which is why a strategic plan to address this multiplicity was necessary. Information on these sites is available on [NMED's Uranium Mine Dashboard](#).

Uranium mine cleanup presents a significant economic opportunity for New Mexico. Reclamation efforts require a wide range of skills and offer opportunities for innovation in various fields, including engineering, geology, geochemistry, and hydrology. Funding from sources such as the \$1 billion settlement with Tronox corporation directly impact the New Mexican economy through infrastructure upgrades to access neglected sites, training and capacity in remediation studies, and help set precedents that inform decisions for future remediation throughout New Mexico and the United States. The Economic Development Department has labeled uranium mine cleanup as a Sustainable & Green Energy target economic development industry intent on the promotion of worker training and business development for reclamation activities.