

LANL HSWA 6E/11/93/6

M E M O R A N D U M

HSWA 93

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TO: File: LANL RED 93
FROM: *BSW* Bruce Swanton, Program Manager
DOE/LANL Oversight Program
DATE: February 9, 1993
SUBJECT: Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Five Year Site Specific Plan, Draft, 9/92. (ER) (Environmental Management Division, LANL)

In preparation for the bi-monthly AIP meeting I reviewed the subject document. The following comments are keyed to the page numbers in the document.

- 1 "Laboratory environmental impact is minimal because of biological and hydrological characteristics of the area and past waste management practices." Firstly, the cumulative impact of Los Alamos National Laboratory ("Lab") on the surrounding environment is unknown at this time, and secondly, some waste management practices at the Lab in the past have been highly questionable. Even the impact of current lab waste management practices is of unknown environmental significance (e.g., tritiated water disposal in Mortendad and Los Alamos canyons).
- 1 "There is no known hydrological connection between the Laboratory surface site and the main aquifer from which the municipal water supply for Los Alamos is obtained." The main aquifer has been shown to be at equilibrium with atmospheric pressure and is unconfined within the Lab 'footprint'. (See "Water Supply at Los Alamos", Purtymun & Stoker 1988; or "Hydrologic Characteristics of the Main Aquifer in the Los Alamos Area", Purtymun 1984.)
- 9 I do not understand the cause for delaying removal of the mixed waste drums in pad storage under earth cover until completion of the MWSDF. Why cannot a low-cost modular warehouse building be purchased and set up at TA-54 and the drums be removed now?



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- 17 "ER Program potential release sites of highest priority include the following. . ." The second item is listed as "Canyon alluvial systems (because of the potential off-site transport). . ." Given the Lab's stated position as indicated in the second excerpt from page 1, above, I interpret this to mean the Lab is concerned about surface runoff potential, not about the percolation of dissolved hazardous materials to groundwater through the intervening volcanic materials. I urge the lab to work with NMED and EPA toward formalization of plans to determine the present depth of penetration of hazardous materials at Lab locations with long histories of storage or disposal of hazardous liquids on the land surface. Until this issue is decided an appropriate prioritization of ER projects cannot be made. In view of the existing tritium contamination in Los Alamos and Mortendad canyons, I consider this project to be of the most immediate priority.
- 18 ". . .RCRA-permitted MWSDF to receive waste generated by the ER Program." Is this the only waste stream to be potentially directed to the MWSDF?
- 18 "Laboratory environs are compatible with siting of a MWSDF." A draft AIP review of the supporting data does not appear to support this conclusion at this time.
- 24 The waste minimization objective is designed "to spearhead the Laboratory-wide effort to minimize the generation of radioactive. . . wastes. . ." Does this objective apply to the generation of tritium-contaminated water, and if so, how is this to be done?
- 26 "The EPA is the primary interface for corrective activities and WM activities associated with the CWA (NPDES Permit and SPCC Plan); Radioactive emission requirements under the CAA; HSWA, CERCLA and Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA); and TSCA (replacement of PCB equipment and disposal of PCBs)." Regarding the CWA, NPDES and Spill Prevention, the statement is misleading in not pointing out the existence of New Mexico's Water Quality Control Commission regulations which provide the State with authorities over surface water and potential impacts to surface water which are the equivalent to EPA's jurisdictions in many instances (e.g., State actions concerning SWMU 3-010). With reference to the CAA, it should be recognized that the State has statutory authority in this area and the state could promulgate such regulations. Regarding HSWA, the State Hazardous Waste Act includes jurisdiction over Solid Waste Management Units (§74-4-4.2.B) which the Environment Department considers to be equivalent to that of the EPA, and is using the proposed 40CFR §264 "Subpart S" regulations as guidance in this area.

- 38 "New guidance issued by DOE in December 1990 requires a notice of violation . . . in order to be eligible for . . . funding. . . . DOE has eliminated the projects listed in Table 4-2 from CAs funding for FY94." The table indicates elimination of CAs for UST replacements. Has NMED's UST Bureau been notified of this change?
- 41 "Ten RFI work plans will be initiated in FY92 and submitted to EPA in May 1993." AIP staff have been unable to communicate with the OU project leaders currently drafting these plans. Lessons learned during review of the first eight plans may therefore not be applied to this next set of ten plans. This may result in significant losses of both time and funds in the redrafting of these RFI workplans.
- 42 "An EIS is anticipated to be required for NEPA compliance for the RCRA MWSDF." Does this statement reflect current thinking?
- 64 "The Laboratory has been requested to update the EA and bring it into compliance with the most recent DOE guidance." The AIP program would appreciate a complete copy of this guidance.