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GOVERNOR

21 May 1996

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Mr. Court Fesmire, LAAO AIP
Point of Contact
Department of Energy
Los Alamos Area Office
MS A316
Los Alamos, NM 87544

SUBJECT: Recommendations concerning the prioritization of Solid Waste Management Units at Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Fesmire:

As part of DOE OB's oversight of the Environmental Restoration Project, we recommended that LANL focus its efforts (i.e., cleanup, stabilization, etc.) to SWMUs that contain high concentrations of surficial contaminants, both radionuclides and non-radionuclides, that are subject to transport during surface-water run-off events. For example, Rad- and Chem-Van data obtained at E-F firing site (TA-15) show gross beta at 1,469 pCi/g, lead at 335 ppm and uranium at 2291 ppm in soil/sediment within a drainage located south of the site (LANL, RFI Report for PRSS at TA-15, 1995). The drainage extends to Potrillo Canyon; therefore, primary or fixed contaminants may have been transported into Potrillo Canyon. Other sites include: 1) SWMU 3-056(c), which contained PCBs as high as 33,000 ppm that may have re-mobilized by erosional processes and deposited downstream (LANL, NOD for SWMU 3-056(c), Expedited Cleanup Status Report, 1996), 2) SWMU 1-001(d), located on the south facing hillside of Los Alamos Canyon, which contains concentrations of plutonium-239/240 (7,282 pCi/g), mercury (1,770 ppm), chromium (398 ppm) and lead (548 ppm) of which may be entering Los Alamos Canyon and ultimately the Rio Grande (see LANL, Remedial Action Plan for SWMU 1-001(d) Hillside, 1996), and 3) SWMU 21-001(k), located on the north-facing side of DP Canyon, contains plutonium-239/240 at 46,000 pCi/g, and field observations at this SWMU show that erosional processes are occurring (see LANL, Phase Report 1C, TA-21 Operable Unit, 1994).

If there are any questions concerning this matter please contact me at 672-0448 or Michael Dale at 672-0449.

Sincerely,

Stephen Janicak

Steve Janicak, NMED, DOE OB, LANL POC
New Mexico Environment Department

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