



**Department of Energy**  
 Albuquerque Operations Office  
 Los Alamos Area Office  
 Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544  
 NOV 21 1996



Neil Weber, Bureau Chief  
 AIP, DOE Oversight Program  
 New Mexico Environment Department  
 2044 Galisteo St., Building A  
 P. O. Box 26110  
 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Dear Mr. Weber:

This letter is to clarify the Department of Energy (DOE), Los Alamos Area Office's position regarding advice given in the field by DOE Oversight Bureau personnel. This topic came up at the November 14 public meeting in Espanola where it appeared that DOE Oversight Bureau personnel conveyed to the public that DOE and the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) were typically unresponsive to advice from Oversight Bureau personnel while assessing conditions in the field.

DOE requests that the Oversight Bureau personnel refrain from creating an expectation that LANL field personnel should act upon unwritten suggestions given by Oversight Bureau personnel. Such an expectation goes beyond the provisions in the Agreement In Principle. Please keep in mind that DOE works with the New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau (HRMB) on a regular basis in setting environmental work priorities at LANL. HRMB coordinates among all cognizant NMED bureaus and provides written comments, suggestions, and direction. Suggestions for performing additional field work should be made within this planning process to ensure appropriate prioritization of tasks.

We request that the Oversight Bureau personnel continue to provide advance notice to the DOE Point of Contact when they observe conditions in the field that they plan on reporting to other NMED bureaus as possible regulatory violations. We regard any potential regulatory violation very seriously, and request that this advance notice include verbal notification and a written description of the field conditions in question.

In addition, we also appreciate written comments on general environmental reports and plans. Oversight Bureau personnel often provide a valuable perspective which we have, and will continue to, include in our planning process along with other NMED,

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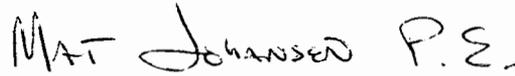
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Neil Weber

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Stakeholder, and public priorities. Please call me at (505) 667-0575 with any questions on this matter.

Sincerely,



Mathew P. Johansen  
Office of Environment and Projects

LAAMEP:2MJ-019

cc:

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