



Department of Energy
 Albuquerque Operations Office
 Los Alamos Area Office
 Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544



JUN 02 1999

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. James Bearzi, Chief
 Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau
 New Mexico Environment Department
 2044 Galisteo Street, Bldg. A
 P. O. Box 26110
 Santa Fe, NM 87505

(K)

Dear Mr. Bearzi:

Subject: Portsmouth Treatability Study - Delay in Returning Unused Samples and Residue

The purpose of this letter is to provide written notification to the New Mexico Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau (HRMB) that three treatability studies have been discontinued at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and to inform HRMB that some difficulties have been encountered in meeting the one-year-time frame for offsite shipment of sample material mandated by 40 CFR 261.4(f)(5). The three treatability studies were associated with materials that are described as "Oil Leak Gunk," "X-710 Gunk," and "Freon Degraded Residue." Notification of these three treatability studies was provided by the Department of Energy (DOE) and the University of California (UC) by way of a letter dated September 27, 1996. This notification was followed by a request to extend the treatability start date due to the stand-down of analytical laboratories at the CMR complex. This request was communicated to HRMB by way of a letter dated September 18, 1997, with the subject "Effect of CMR Stand-Down on Seven Treatability Studies."

The studies have been discontinued because the one-year time frame limitation provided for in the regulations applicable to treatability studies cannot be met. We estimate that all residues and unused samples should be shipped offsite to DOE's Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (Portsmouth) in Piketon, Ohio, by no later than June 4, 1999.

The treatability studies were discontinued on April 22, 1999. Since that time, UC staff have been engaged in the process of repackaging all unused samples, involving approximately 69 containers, for shipment back to Portsmouth, along with 13 small containers of residues that were generated as a result of the treatability studies. While repackaging has been occurring, there has been a parallel effort to complete all necessary paperwork for shipping and receiving.



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James Bearzi

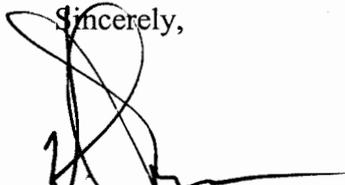
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Despite the efforts described above, at this time it appears that we may have difficulty in meeting the June 4, 1999 shipping deadline. Portsmouth has not yet provided required shipping and receiving authorizations. Although we are making every effort to meet the shipping deadline, there exists the possibility that we may not meet it and we want to inform you of this possibility.

If it appears that UC will not be shipping by close of business on June 4, 1999, a representative of UC or DOE will provide your office with verbal notification via telephone, to be followed up by written notification, explaining why the shipment was not made. We will also provide details as to what steps UC staff is taking in terms of corrective action to see that the material is shipped off-site as expeditiously as possible.

We thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at (505) 665-5042.

Sincerely,



M. L. "Jody" Plum
Office of Environment

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