

General

## Allen, Pam, NMENV

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**From:** Stone, Marissa, NMENV  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 07, 2007 10:18 AM  
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Wednesday, February 7, 2007

State to Issue Lab Waste Permit

By John Arnold  
Journal Staff Writer

The Environment Department plans to issue a long-awaited permit that will regulate hazardous waste at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The lab is operating under a permit that expired in 1999, but was extended while regulators focused on drafting a separate cleanup order for the lab. That consent order was finalized in 2005 and requires the lab to clean up decades worth of old waste.

The permit— issued under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act— focuses on current and future hazardous waste generated, stored and treated at the lab.

"This permit will complement the historic LANL consent order in ensuring that legacy waste is cleaned up at LANL and that ongoing lab operations are as clean and safe as possible," state Environment Secretary Ron Curry said in a news release.

The Environment Department plans to issue a draft of the permit in August and will take extensive public comment on it, a process that could shed light on LANL hazardous waste practices, the department said.

Lab spokesman James Rickman said that the lab "fully supports the public process" and looks forward to seeing the draft permit.

While the federal government regulates radioactive waste, the state-issued permit will cover solvents, chemical waste and explosives waste generated from weapons development and testing.

The lab currently ships such waste off-site for disposal, but Area G and other LANL waste dumps that accepted hazardous waste before the lab began shipping it will be cleaned up or stabilized under the new permit, said state Hazardous Waste Bureau chief James Bearzi.

Regulators begin work on overdue waste permit

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Andy Lenderman | The New Mexican  
February 7, 2007

State regulators announced Tuesday that they will create a new permit to govern hazardous waste at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where nuclear weapons development and other work is performed.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act permit will also open a "discussion" about how to manage a 65-acre dump known as Area G, the last place at the lab where radioactive waste is accepted for permanent burial, the New Mexico Environment Department reported.



The draft permit will be released in August and public meetings will be scheduled then.

Environment Secretary Ron Curry has been under pressure from nuclear watchdog groups for years to do something about the state permit, which expired in 1999 and was extended. The new permit will deal with current and future waste. Old waste will continue to be governed by an existing consent order.

"I hope that by making this timeline and draft permit available as early as possible and by providing public forums, we will allow for maximum input from residents," Curry said in a news release.

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"I both praise and condemn the Environment Department," Jay Coghlan of Nuclear Watch New Mexico said. "Obviously, they should have done it literally years ago. So what is pleasing now is that they have stated a firm date for starting the whole process. I trust that they will keep that date, and in the event that they begin to slip, we'll certainly remind them."

Hazardous waste to be regulated by the state includes solvents, chemicals, metals, explosives and mixed radioactive waste.

"The lab fully supports the public process, and we look forward to seeing the draft permit," lab spokesman James Rickman said.

The permit does not cover radioactive waste, which is handled by the U.S. Department of Energy. Low-level waste is buried there, and transuranic waste is stored temporarily there before being shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad.

Area G is an unlined, 65-acre dump with about 200 shafts and 38 pits that opened in 1957. Activist groups have expressed concern over whether that waste could someday seep into the aquifer and pollute the state's groundwater.

But the waste is about 850 feet above the regional aquifer, and no impact from Area G has been detected to date in the regional aquifer, Rickman said.

The lab will need to consider everything from taking no action on Area G to digging up the waste and sending it somewhere else, said Marissa Stone, a spokeswoman for the Environment Department.

The old portion of Area G is scheduled for closure by 2015. But an expanded area, which has yet to open, is in the planning stages.

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KOBTV

State department seeks public's input on how LANL handles waste

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By: Associated Press

SANTA FE - New Mexicans will get a chance to speak out on how waste should be managed at the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry says the agency in August will release a new draft permit for regulating waste at the lab. The lab's current permit expired in 1999, but has been extended.

Curry said the public can provide input into how waste at the lab should be managed and ask for hearings on the draft permit. Curry said the state agency wants to make sure the public has plenty of time and opportunity to do both.

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