Permit

Los Alamos National Laboratory
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545

May 23, 1991
ADO-91-302
A127
(505)
(FTS)

Mr. James Graham (6W-ET)
Texas New Mexico Enforcement Section Chief
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
First Interstate Bank Building at Fountain Place
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, Texas 75202-2733

Dear Mr. Graham:

SUBJECT: **LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY, NPDES PERMIT NO. NM0028355, WASTE STREAM CHARACTERIZATION PROJECT**

I would like to thank you, Mr. Bob Hiller and Mr. Everett Spencer of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Enforcement Section, and Mr. Fred Humke of the EPA Industrial Permits Section, for the time you spent with the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) staff on May 1, 1991, discussing the Laboratory's waste stream characterization project. During the meeting, I understand the following items were discussed:

1. The Laboratory updated the EPA staff on the status of the Laboratory's waste stream characterization project. Specifically, the Laboratory discussed the implementation of the project and the activities that have already been completed.

2. The EPA is in the process of revising the Administrative Order (AO), Docket No. VI-90-1263, and the corresponding Federal Facilities Compliance Agreement (FFCA), Docket No. VI-90-1240, to incorporate the compliance schedule for the waste stream characterization project. According to Mr. Hiller, the revised AO will be issued to the Laboratory in the near future.

3. The Laboratory explained to EPA that during waste stream identification and characterization activities, it is possible that previously unidentified waste streams and waste sources, as well as unpermitted outfalls, may be found. The Laboratory does not expect that these sources will pose an immediate threat to health or the environment; however, if any such new sources or outfalls are discovered, the Lab will report it

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immediately to the EPA and New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) as required under the Clean Water Act and the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission Regulations and take immediate corrective actions. It is the Laboratory's understanding that it should handle all previously unidentified waste streams and unpermitted discharges in accordance with the pending AO requirements.

4. The Laboratory was concerned about satisfying both the EPA Enforcement Section and the Industrial Permits Section with regards to reporting of information discovered during the waste stream characterization project. The EPA and Laboratory discussed possible reporting procedures for submitting this information to EPA and the NMED. The EPA recommended that the Laboratory submit a quarterly waste stream characterization progress report which would include, when necessary, information for permit modifications for existing outfalls and permit applications for all potential discharges not covered by the existing NPDES Permit. Mr. Humke indicated that the new NPDES Permit may need to reference the waste stream compliance schedule. However, Mr. Humke did not feel that the NPDES Permit should incorporate the compliance schedule.

As a result of the discussion, it is my understanding that the pending AO and corresponding FFCA will include the waste stream characterization schedule as proposed by the Laboratory in our response to AO Docket No. VI-91-067, dated February 15, 1991. The pending AO will include quarterly reporting that will update the EPA's Enforcement Section on the Laboratory's progress pertaining to the project. It is our understanding that all previously unidentified waste streams and unpermitted discharges will be administered under the AO until such time as they are corrected or become included under the Laboratory's NPDES permit by the EPA's Industrial Permits Section. If the procedures set forth in the AO with regard to newly discovered sources or outfalls are properly followed, enforcement action under the permit will be avoided. The EPA suggested that supporting documentation for the project be kept available for EPA and NMED review but not submitted at this time. Summaries of all activities conducted by the Laboratory thus far should be submitted according to the pending AO quarterly reporting requirements.

The waste stream identification and characterization project represents a comprehensive effort to verify that each waste

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Stream is included in the proper category of the Laboratory's NPDES Permit and that all outfalls are properly monitored. The Laboratory is making every possible effort to correct any problems as soon as p ible within budget constraints and within limitations imp sed by other regulatory programs.

The Laboratory would again like to extend an invitation for the EPA to visit our facility. The Laboratory suggests that because of the uniqueness of the LANL operations and their significant diversity and complexity, a site visit would help EPA staff gain a firsthand knowledge of effluent related issues.

Please call Steve Rae or Roy Bohn of the Laboratory's Environmental Protection Group (HSE-8) at (505) 665-1859 if additional information or modifications are required in order to accurately summarize the recent discussion on waste stream characterization.

Sincerely,

Allen J. Tiedman
Associate Director
for Operations

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