

Permit

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For Immediate Release

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Environment Department Issues Renewal of the Hazardous Waste Permit for Los Alamos National Laboratory

(Santa Fe, NM) - The New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry today issued a final order granting the renewal of the hazardous waste permit for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), located in Los Alamos County approximately 60 miles north-northeast of Albuquerque and 25 miles northwest of Santa Fe.

The renewal permit authorizes LANL to manage and store of hazardous waste from research and development activities, general facility operations, environmental restoration activities, and decontamination and decommissioning projects. The U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA) the owners and co-operators of the facility, and Los Alamos National Security, LLC (LANS) co-operators at the facility, also called the Permittees.

"The Department has been working diligently with the applicants and other interested individuals and groups to finalize this complex renewal Permit," Secretary Curry said. The Department and LANL underwent considerable public involvement before issuing the Permit. Public meetings were held throughout New Mexico's northern Rio Grande valley to gather and address public concerns. The public hearing on the renewal permit was held in Santa Fe, Espanola, and Albuquerque for fifteen days in April of 2010 to resolve contested issues.

The renewal Permit allows the Permittees to manage and store hazardous waste at 24 permitted hazardous waste management units that include waste chemicals such as spent solvents, corrosive liquids, metals and metallic compounds, used batteries and battery fluids, and hazardous wastes mixed with radioactive wastes, *i.e.*, mixed waste. Of LANL's 330 different types of hazardous wastes approximately one-sixth are mixed waste. In 2008 LANL generated approximately 255,000 lbs. of hazardous or mixed wastes. The Permit requires that all wastes be sufficiently characterized to know precisely what hazards they pose.

The Department is not issuing, and LANL did not seek, an operating permit for LANL's hazardous waste disposal units. However, hazardous waste was disposed of in the past at Material Disposal Areas G, H, and L at Technical Area 54. The Permit addresses the final disposition of these areas, for closure and post-closure care.

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The renewal Permit coordinates hazardous waste cleanup at LANL with a Consent Order issued by the Department in May 2005. Together the Permit and the Consent Order address contaminant release actions including contaminant investigation, remedy selection, and groundwater monitoring facility-wide.

The renewal Permit includes new provisions that will require the Permittees to notify interested persons, who have signed up, to receive e-mail notification on specific actions and submittals by the Permittees. The permit further requires the Permittees to establish a formal community relations plan that will be developed in consultation with and annually reviewed by communities and interested members of the public. This plan will keep these parties informed of permit-related activities, explain how they can participate in such activities, and provide a mechanism for commenting on ways to improve communication. In addition, the Permittees will be required to set up a virtual (electronic) information repository and physical information repository of LANL documents. This will provide the public with access to documents and information through the internet and at a physical location.

The public hearing also addressed the denial to permit treatment of high explosive hazardous waste by open burning at Technical Area 16. The risk assessment that LANL conducted showed that, if continued, open burning of high explosives would result in ecological risk. Also, the application did not adequately address alternatives to open burning and that the Department received extensive, approximately 1,400 individuals, comments expressing opposition to continued burning. The Judge Joseph Alarid, the hearing officer, stated in his report that "the Applicants have not met their burden of demonstrating that the permit should be issued and not be denied for hazardous waste open burn treatment units at TA-16."

In addition, financial assurance was also contested which requires the facility to _____

The renewal Permit will become effective on December 30, 2010 and for a term of ten years, at which time LANL will have had to reapply for a renewal permit or cease the authorized activities. The final Permit, in addition to the Secretary's Final Order and the Departments response to public comments are available for review on the Department's website at <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/hwb/lanlperm.html>.

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