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Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau

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**CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

August 20, 1999

Dr. John C. Browne, Director
Los Alamos National Laboratory
P.O. Box 1663, MS A100
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545

Mr. Theodore Taylor, Project Manager
Los Alamos Area Office-Department of Energy
528 35th Street, MS A316
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

**RE: COMPLETION OF R-9 AND R-15 REGIONAL CHARACTERIZATION WELLS
LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY (LANL)**

Dear Dr. Browne and Mr. Taylor:

This letter responds to LANL's August 11, 1999 letter, *R-9 Completion and Sampling Notification* (referenced by EM/ER:99-210) received by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau (HRMB). The letter indicates that LANL is to return to the R-9 Regional Well to remove the temporary well casing, deepen the borehole 50 feet, and install permanent well casing. These activities are to begin on or about August 23, 1999.

It is HRMB's understanding that the drill rig utilized at the R-15 regional well site will be shutdown and mobilized to the R-9 well site to complete these activities prior to the completion of the R-15 well. This is being done due to the fact that expenses incurred by drilling can be charged to the FY00 budget. HRMB is concerned that time and expense will be lost due to the demobilization/mobilization of the drill rig from R-15 to R-9. LANL will then have to mobilize the drill rig to the R-15 site either from the R-9 or another well site. In part due to the apparent lack of flexibility of wells assigned to DP or EM funding and the budgets of given wells, the progress of the regional well characterization continues to fall further behind schedule.

I emphasize that LANL has yet to complete a well pursuant to the HWP. Moving the lone drill rig about the facility further inhibits LANL's already questionable ability to complete a non-alluvial well. HRMB does not approve this activity, and requires the current well, R-15, be completed prior to activities at R-9. Furthermore, we believe LANL is out of compliance with its



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Dr. Browne and Mr. Taylor

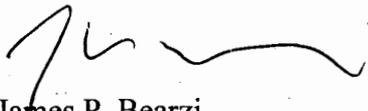
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permit requirements by failing to implement the HWP. A compliance schedule for completion of all partially complete regional characterization wells must be submitted to HRMB within ten (10) working days of receipt of this letter to provide a means for advancement in meeting the approved HWP. If NMED does not receive a satisfactory response, NMED may initiate a formal enforcement action.

If you have concerns regarding this letter please contact me at (505) 827-1567, or John Kieling at (505) 827-1558 extension 1012.

Sincerely,



James P. Bearzi

Chief

Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau

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