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*Date:* February 15, 2008  
*Refer To:* EP2008-0093

James P. Bearzi, Bureau Chief  
Hazardous Waste Bureau  
New Mexico Environment Department  
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1  
Santa Fe, NM 87505-6303

**Subject: Request for Extension for the Completion of the Removal of the Mortandad Permeable Reactive Barrier**

Dear Mr. Bearzi:


Los Alamos National Laboratory (the Laboratory) is requesting an extension for the completion of the removal of the Mortandad permeable reactive barrier (PRB). In preparation for mobilization, Laboratory Water Stewardship Program has become increasingly concerned over the degradation of the road access to the PRB as a result of the heavy and frequent snows this year. There is serious concern over the ability to conduct safe operations given the road condition, particularly related to the transportation of the approximately 20-ton (20-yd<sup>3</sup>) rolloff bins containing excavated waste. Because the size of the staging area at the PRB is limited, the PRB-derived waste containers have to be transported to a storage area on the adjacent mesa top. The road conditions into and within Mortandad are problematic for heavy vehicle use. As these snows begin to melt, the project would encounter deep mud that could worsen the already difficult road conditions. An incident has already occurred when a jack-knifed trailer blocked the road on the hill out of the canyon for 3 days.

The Laboratory would like to postpone the work until the middle of May 2008. In addition to the concerns and delays caused by road conditions, high-noise operations in portions of Mortandad Canyon, including at the PRB site, are restricted because of a threatened-and-endangered species (spotted owl) exclusion period that generally lasts until early May of each year. Following the spotted owl exclusion period and after the road is dry, the Laboratory plans to conduct substantial road upgrades in Mortandad Canyon to facilitate safe operations for heavy vehicle traffic. The new schedule will allow us to complete the removal of the Mortandad PRB in a safe and controlled manner and will be completed by the beginning of the monsoon season in early July 2008.




If you have any questions, please contact Danny Katzman at (505) 667-6333 (katzman@lanl.gov) or Mat Johansen at (505) 665-5046 (mjohansen@doeal.gov).

Sincerely,

*for* 

Susan G. Stiger, Associate Director  
Environmental Programs  
Los Alamos National Laboratory

Sincerely,



David R. Gregory, Project Director  
Environmental Operations  
Los Alamos Site Office

SS/DG/PH/DK:acm

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