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AQS
Environmental

2112 Deer Run Drive
South Weber, Utah 84405

(801) 476-1365
www.aqsnet.com

December 21, 2010

DCN: NMED-2010-41

Mr. David Cobrain
NMED - Hazardous Waste Bureau
2905 Rodeo Park Dr. E, Building 1
Santa Fe, NM 87505

RE: Draft Technical Evaluation of the Responses to Notice of Disapproval Comments on the *Nest Box Monitoring Report for the Upper Pajarito Canyon Watershed*, Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico, dated October 8, 2010

Dear Mr. Cobrain:

This letter addresses the draft technical review the responses to Notice of Disapproval (NOD) comments on the *Nest Box Monitoring Report for the Upper Pajarito Canyon Watershed*, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), New Mexico (dated October 8, 2010).

Comment 1: The response to this comment is adequate as presented. The Results section of the report (page 3) has been modified to include "Submission of additional insect samples for analysis of metals, PCBs [polychlorinated biphenyls], and dioxins and furans...." Based on this, it appears that LANL intends to sample for metals and PCBs. Sampling of semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) is addressed below in Comment 2.

Comment 2: The response to this comment is adequate as presented. In reviewing the data collected for SVOCs, the detection frequency has been very low and spatial extent limited. This is most likely indicative of concentrations not being sufficient or widespread to accumulate in the monitored species. The SVOCs that tend to drive most risk assessments at Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs) and Areas of Concern (AOCs) tend to be polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which have not been detected in the nest box studies. Based on the data to date, continued sampling for SVOCs would probably not provide valuable data for assessing impact of SWMU/AOC-related constituents on the watershed. However, in the event that new data become available during SWMU/AOC investigations that appear to show potential impact for migration through the watershed, re-visitation of sampling for SVOCs may be warranted.

Comment 3: The response to this comment is partially adequate. The response clarified that the gender ratio data was collected over the time period of 1997 to 2008. However, the response also indicated that eggshell thicknesses and other measures of nest success were not measured in the cited report. While not specific stated, LANL appears to be drawing the conclusion that evaluate of gender ratios if sufficient to draw a conclusion on overall nest success, to include eggshell thickness. However, the response does not specifically address the fact that a trend

analysis of eggshell thickness was proposed in the plan. Additional data are being proposed and results, including an assessment of nest success, will be reported in the August 2011 report. It is suggested that final evaluation of this comment be postponed pending the August report and evaluation of the data and conclusions provided therein.

Comment 4: The response to this comment cannot be fully assessed at this time. The response indicates that additional data to supplement the conclusion that there is no adverse impact in reach AW-1 will be provided with the August 2011 report. Until these additional data and/or lines of evidence are evaluated, no official determination of impact should be made.

Comment 5: The response to this comment is adequate. The response indicates that collection of samples for dioxin/furan analyses will be attempted. It is understood that some issues may arise concerning lack of sufficient samples for analyses. It is agreed that these issues be evaluated annually and if needed, other means to assess impact of dioxins/furans explored.

If you or any of your staff have questions, please contact me at (801) 451-2864 or via email at paigewalton@msn.com.

Thank you,

Paige Walton
AQS Senior Scientist and Program Manager

cc: Dan Comeau, NMED (electronic)
Joel Workman, AQS (electronic)