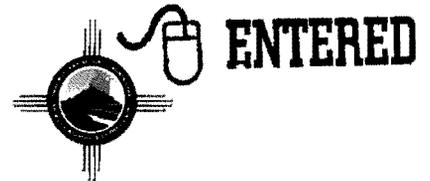




Environmental Programs
 P.O. Box 1663, MS M991
 Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545
 (505) 606-2337/FAX (505) 665-1812

TA16



National Nuclear Security Administration
 Los Alamos Site Office, MS A316
 Environmental Restoration Program
 Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544
 (505) 667-4255/FAX (505) 606-2132

Date: September 23, 2009
Refer To: EP2009-0491

James 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 Completion of Wells R-47 and R-48

Dear Mr. Bearzi:

Los Alamos National Laboratory (the Laboratory) requests an extension from the current due date of October 1, 2009, to October 23, 2009, to complete construction of regional aquifer wells R-47 and R-48. The October 1, 2009, due date is specified in the New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED's) January 26, 2009, Approval With Modifications Supplemental Investigation Work Plan for Intermediate and Regional Groundwater at Technical Area 16 (Consolidated Unit 16-021(c)-99). The extension is requested because of conditions encountered during drilling the wells that have delayed completion.

Several factors have affected the completion schedule at well R-47. Drilling began on June 23, 2009. During the drilling, downhole tooling failed on a number of occasions, causing delays while tools were fished from the hole and replacement parts were shipped. Additionally, an unexpected perched horizon was encountered at 840 ft below ground surface (bgs). Significant time was spent characterizing the zone and then sealing it off to ensure that perched water did not advance downhole with drilling. Several delays also resulted from lightning shutdown at Technical Area 16.

Deepening activities in the existing open borehole for well R-48 [formerly borehole CdV-16-3(i)] began on June 1, 2009. A blank section of casing was advanced downhole to determine the straightness of the borehole. The casing blank could not be advanced to the existing total depth of the open borehole, prompting further evaluation and eventually the decision to attempt to advance the borehole without the use of casing advance or drilling fluids. This proved unsuccessful because of the lack of drilling fluid and cuttings returns. The Laboratory then requested and NMED approved on July 28, 2009, a variance to use drilling foam. However, in an effort to maintain schedule at R-47, the drill rig working at R-48 moved to start the borehole at R-47, and an additional rig was mobilized to R-48 and began drilling on August 28, 2009. Several delays due to lightning have also occurred at this well.



Despite the issues described above, it appeared that the Laboratory could complete the wells by October 1, 2009. However, on Tuesday, September 15, 2009, a significant accident with injury occurred at the R-47 well site prompting a safety standdown for all work being conducted by that drilling contractor which also includes work at R-48. The standdown will remain in effect until the Laboratory and its subcontractors are confident that work can resume safely, but is expected to be lifted during the week of September 21, 2009. The Laboratory's requested due date of October 23, 2009, is based on the combination of all the factors described above.

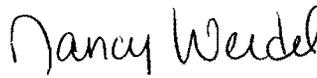
The Laboratory appreciates your consideration of this request for extension. If you have any questions, please contact Danny Katzman at (505) 667-6333 (katzman@lanl.gov) or Woody Woodworth at (505) 665-5820 (lwoodworth@doeal.gov).

Sincerely,



Michael J. Graham, Associate Director
Environmental Programs
Los Alamos National Laboratory

Sincerely,



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

MG/DG/PH/DK:sm

Cy: Laurie King, EPA Region 6, Dallas, TX
Steve Yanicak, NMED-DOE-OB, MS M894
Tom Skibitski, NMED-OB, Santa Fe, NM
Keyana DeAguero, DOE-LASO (date-stamped letter emailed)
Woody Woodworth, DOE-LASO, MS A316
Danny Katzman, EP-LWSP, MS M992
Paul Huber, EP- LWSP, MS M992
Michael J. Graham, ADEP, MS M991
Alison M. Dorries, EP-WES, MS M996
Kristine Smeltz, EP-WES, MS M992
RPF, MS M707
IRM-RMMSO, MS A150 (date-stamped letter emailed)