

TA-21

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT



BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR

Hazardous Waste Bureau
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-6303
Telephone (505) 428-2500
Fax (505) 428-2567
www.nmenv.state.nm.us



RON CURRY
SECRETARY

DERRITH WATCHMAN-MOORE
DEPUTY SECRETARY

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

April 14, 2004

David Gregory, Federal Project Manager
Los Alamos Site Office
Department of Energy
528 35th Street, Mail Stop A316
Los Alamos, NM 87544

G. Pete Nanos, Director
Los Alamos National Laboratory
P.O. Box 1663, Mail Stop A100
Los Alamos, NM 87545

**RE: DISAPPROVAL OF THE VCA COMPLETION REPORT FOR
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT UNIT 21-024(f) & AOCs C-21-015 & 21-030
LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY, NM0890010515
HWB-LANL-03-016**

Dear Mr Gregory and Mr. Nanos:

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is in receipt of the VCA Completion Report for Solid Waste Management Unit 21-024(f) and AOC C-21-015 and 21-030, dated September 2003 and referenced by LA-UR-03-5441 (ER2003-0472). NMED is disapproving this report and is providing deficiency comments as outlined in the attachment to this letter. The Department of Energy and the University of California (collectively, the "Permittees") must respond to the comments within thirty (30) days of receipt of this letter.

This SWMU and these AOCs are part of land transfer tract A-15. At this time, NMED can not determine whether or not the corrective measures implemented at these sites are protective of human health and the environment. After its review of the Permittees' responses to comments, NMED will make this determination and identify if any further investigation, assessment, or remediation is needed.

The Permittees are reminded that a Class 1 permit modification request must be submitted prior to



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Mr. David Gregory and Mr. S. Pete Nanos

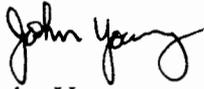
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transferring any portion of the facility, and a Class 3 permit modification request submitted to remove any SWMUs from the permit.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. John Young of my staff at (505) 428-2538.

Sincerely,



John Young
LANL Corrective Action Project Leader
Hazardous Waste Bureau

JY:hm

cc:

J. Young, NMED HWB
C. Voorhees, NMED DOE OB
S. Yanicak, NMED DOE OB, MS J993
L. King, EPA 6PD-N
J. Vozella, DOE LASO, MS A316
T. Taylor DOE LASO, MS A316
B. Ramsey, LANL RRES/DO, MS M591
N. Quintana, LANL E/ER, MS M992
D. McInroy, LANL E/ER, MS M992
file: Reading and LANL (Land Transfer)

Attachment
Disapproval of the VCA Completion Report for SWMU 21-024(f) and
Areas of Concern C-21-015 and 21-030

Specific Comments:

1. **Section 2.3.1.2 SWMU 21-024(f) Septic Tank and Line Removal and Confirmation Sampling Activities, p. 10, paragraph 5:**

NMED Comment: This paragraph describes the use of a photo ionization detector (PID) to field screen for VOCs. The Permittees must provide more information regarding the screening and calibration methods used, frequency of detection, lamp voltage(s) used, sample collection methodology, and specific name of the instrument.

2. **Section 2.3.1.3 SWMU 21-024(f) Outfall Slope Sampling, p. 12, bullet identification section:**

NMED Comment: Fracture flow was not addressed in this investigation. The Permittees must provide information on possible contaminant migration through the tuff in the outfall area.

3. **Section 2.3.1.4 AOC 21-030 Outlet Line/Sump Removal and Confirmation Sampling Activities, p. 14, paragraph 1 and p. 17 paragraph 1.**

Permittees Statement: "Recovered cores were first screened for VOCs as the core barrel was opened, followed by screening for alpha and beta/gamma radiation using the previously described equipment."

NMED Comment: The Permittees describe the equipment for screening alpha and beta/gamma radiation on page 14 (paragraph 1), but do not address the instrument used to screen VOCs. The Permittees must provide information about the field screening instrument, and the sampling and calibration methods used to screen VOCs (see also specific comment #1).

4. **Section 2.3.1.4 AOC 21-030 Outlet Line/Sump Removal and Confirmation Sampling Activities, p. 17, paragraph 2:**

Permittees Statement: "The shallowest samples were collected at the fill/tuff interface and a second sample interval was collected starting 1 ft below the bottom of the first interval."

NMED Comment: The Permittees must explain how the fill/tuff interface was identified.

5. **Section 2.3.2.1 Inorganic Chemical Comparison with Background, p. 19, paragraph 4.**

NMED Comment: The paragraph identifies oxalate as not being a historical contaminant at the LANL facility and, therefore, was not retained as a COPC. In the well completion report for R-9, the Permittees identified oxalate as a COPC at TA-21 (regional well R-9(i)). The Permittees shall include oxalate as a COPC and revise the report accordingly.

6. **Section 2.3.3.1 Nature and Extent of Contamination, (Inorganic Chemicals) p. 62, paragraph 4:**

Permittees Statement: "Because perchlorate was not detected in the tank contents, the concentrations of perchlorate are not due to a release from the septic system and the infrequent detection of perchlorate at trace levels do not warrant further sampling for extent."

NMED Comment: The Permittees cannot dismiss perchlorate as a potential contaminant from the septic system. A septic tank is periodically pumped out and processes change overtime. The material in the tank during sampling may not be what was in the tank during a release. Therefore, perchlorate could be a result of a release from the septic tank.

7. **2.3.3.1 Nature and Extent of Contamination, (Summary of Nature and Extent) p. 69, paragraph 3:**

Permittees Statement: "Based on the field screening and visual observations, there is no evidence of a release from the septic tank or sump and associated piping."

NMED Comment: This statement contradicts the rest of the paragraph. Analytical data detected inorganic chemicals above background values and radionuclides above their respective background/fallout values. Contaminated soil was also removed from the outfall pit. Therefore evidence of a release of contaminants to the environment did occur.

8. **2.4.1.1 Human Health (Screening Evaluations (b)), p. 73, paragraph 4:**

Permittees Statement: "...SALs for radionuclides are based on an annual dose limit of 15 mrem/yr."

NMED Comment: NMED is interested in evaluating the total risk posed by all of the COPCs at sites. NMED requests that the Permittees include a screening assessment calculated on risk rather than or in addition to dose.