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Surface Water Quality Bureau
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CERTIFIED MAIL-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED
P 332 409 118

October 8, 1997



Mr. Steve R. Rae
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Water Quality and Hydrology Group ESH-18, MS K497
Los Alamos, NM 87545

RE: Corrective Action for Steam Condensate Line Spill at TA-43-MH1042

Dear Mr. Rae:

On September 25, 1997, the New Mexico Environment Department-Surface Water Quality Bureau (NMED-SWQB) was given a 24-hour oral notification pursuant to WQCC Section 1203 A.1. on a spill which occurred at TA-43-MR 1042 due to a break in a steam condensate line. It was estimated that 5000 gallons of liquid had already been released to a drainage ditch and that the onset of erosion has occurred.

On September 30, 1997, NMED-SWQB was informed by Mr. Harvey Decker of your staff, that responsible parties informed him that repairs to the stem condensate line will not be initiated until mid-November at the earliest. This news is of concern and is not an acceptable corrective action because at the present rate of flow (5 gal/day), approximately 305,280 gallons of liquid will be released from the spill by mid November. With this much liquid being released, the possibility of an impact to SWMU 43-001(b2) located 75 ft. down gradient from this discharge is a strong possibility. SWMU 43-001(b2) was former NPDES Outfall 04A040 which was eliminated from the NPDES permit in 1995 and implicated in the May 1994 RFI Workplan as being involved in release of radioactive contaminated materials. This PRS is also referenced on LANL's list of PRS's with surface water concern.



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Mr. Steve R. Rae
CA for TA-43-MH1042 Spill
October 8, 1997
Page 2

Pursuant to WQCC Section 1203, A. 5. proper corrective action(s) must be implemented and a corrective action report pursuant to WQCC Section 1203, A. 6. be submitted for this spill. The written report in part needs to address methods employed by LANL to prevent an impact to SWMU 43-001(b2).

In addition, the decision by the group responsible for addressing this spill to postpone repairs is disturbing in that these types of decisions could set a negative precedent with regard to how facility operations address corrective action regarding spills associated with line breaks, etc. NMED-SWQB encourages ESH-18 to inform facility operators that any future decisions to defer corrective action regarding spills associated with PRS's is unacceptable.

Your prompt response and cooperation is appreciated. If you have any questions concerning this letter please contact Ms. Barbara Hoditschek of my staff at (505)827-0596.

Sincerely,



Glenn Saums, Mgr.
PSRS, NMED-SWQB

cc:

E. Kelley, Ph.D., Acting-Bureau Chief, NMED-SWQB
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R. Ford-Schmid, NMED-DOE/OB (Santa Fe Office)
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File: TA-43-MH1042:PRS-43-001(b2):1203