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TA-49



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**CERTIFIED MAIL**  
**RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

April 4, 2003

Mr. Ralph Erickson  
Area Manager  
Los Alamos Area Office  
Department of Energy  
528 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

Mr. G. Pete Nanos  
Interim Director  
Los Alamos National Laboratory  
P. O. Box 1663, MS A100  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545

**SUBJECT: CHANGE IN MOISTURE MONITORING FREQUENCY AT  
TECHNICAL AREA 49, MATERIAL DISPOSAL AREA (MDA)-AB  
LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY, EPA ID# NM10890010515  
HWB-LANL-02-017**

Dear Mr. Erickson and Mr. Nanos:

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) received the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) "Quarterly Technical Report October-December 2002" dated February 11, 2003 (LA-UR-03-0817). In Appendix B "Quarterly Moisture-Monitoring Report, First Quarter, Fiscal Year 2003: Technical Area 49, MDA AB," LANL makes a recommendation that the frequency of moisture monitoring be reduced.

Specifically, the recommendation is that moisture monitoring of all neutron access holes be reduced from monthly to bimonthly. LANL also proposes that time domain reflectometry (TDR) monitoring frequency remain the same. TDR probes were installed at two depths and at two locations in the evapotranspiration (ET) cover and are used to evaluate moisture content and relative changes within and beneath the ET cover material.



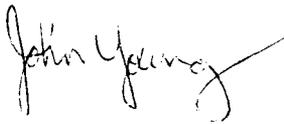
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NMED approves the request to reduce the monthly monitoring to bimonthly monitoring of the neutron access holes and concurs that this frequency of sampling will be sufficient to capture any potential long-term variability in moisture content below the near-surface environment. However, if there is a significant change in storm events and rainfall patterns or an increase in moisture content, NMED may require more frequent or additional monitoring to investigate the affect subsurface water percolation and consequent changes in soil moisture content.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the above address or at (505) 428-2538.

Sincerely,



John Young  
LANL Corrective Action Project Leader  
Permits Management Program

JRY:lw

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File: Reading and HSWA LANL TA-49 [SWMUs 49-001(b), 49-001(c), 49-001(d), & 49-001(g)]