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PUBLIC NOTICE NUMBER 65

NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT  
HAZARDOUS AND RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS BUREAU

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502

June 10, 1994

NOTICE OF APPROVAL  
OF  
A 90-DAY EMERGENCY TREATMENT PERMIT FOR MIXED WASTE

The State of New Mexico is authorized to operate a hazardous waste management program in lieu of the Federal program for those portions of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) in effect prior to the enactment of the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984. Under authority of the New Mexico Hazardous Waste Act (Section 74-4-1 et seq., NMSA 1978, as amended, 1993) and the New Mexico Hazardous Waste Management Regulations (HWMR-7), the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) can approve or deny hazardous waste management permit applications, including temporary emergency permits. Under this authority, NMED has approved a **ninety (90)-day emergency permit** for the US Department of Energy/Los Alamos National Laboratories (DOE/LANL) for treatment of a mixed waste (plutonium-impregnated nitrated cheesecloth).

The treatment process will be located in Room 420, Building 4 (the Plutonium Facility), Technical Area 55, Los Alamos National Laboratories, Los Alamos County, New Mexico.

The purpose of this treatment process is to recover the plutonium from the cheesecloth (cellulose). The cheesecloth (less than 44 liters) was used to wipe the interior surfaces of gloveboxes to remove plutonium particles and other material. The cheesecloth became nitrated during this process, causing the cheesecloth to exhibit the hazardous waste characteristics of ignitability and reactivity, thus presenting an imminent and substantial endangerment to human health and the environment.

This emergency permit will regulate the first step in the plutonium recovery process, ashing of the cheesecloth by thermal decomposition. The furnace can containing the cheesecloth during treatment will be purged with argon gas to maintain an inert atmosphere for the thermal decomposition process. Complete ashing

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of the cheesecloth will occur, resulting in t the residual material no longer exhibiting the characteristics of ignitability and reactivity. After thermal decomposition, the offgas produced passes through a scrubber and high energy particulate air filters before emission through a monitored stack. NMED review of this process shows that expected emissions will not require an air quality permit.

The administrative record for this proposed action consists of the permit, a fact sheet, and related correspondence. The administrative record may be reviewed Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at **NMED, Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau, 525 Camino de los Marquez, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502.** The permit and fact sheet may also be viewed at the **Los Alamos National Laboratories Reading Room, 1450 Central Avenue, Suite 101, Los Alamos.** To obtain a copy of the administrative record or any part thereof, at 35 cents per page, please contact Stephanie Kruse at the above Santa Fe address or call 505/827-4308.

Any person who wishes to comment on this permit should submit written comments, along with the commenter's name and address, to Stephanie Kruse at the Santa Fe address given above through **jULY 29, 1994.** The comments will become part of the written record.