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**CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

July 15, 2013

Jose Franco, Manager  
Carlsbad Field Office  
Department of Energy  
P.O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221-3100

M. Farok Sharif, Project Manager  
Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC  
P.O. Box 2078  
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221-5608

**RE: NMED REVIEW OF FINAL AUDIT REPORT,  
HANFORD SITE/CENTRAL CHARACTERIZATION PROJECT AUDIT A-13-15  
WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PLANT  
EPA I.D. NUMBER NM4890139088**

Dear Messrs, Franco and Sharif:

On June 3, 2013, The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) received the Final Audit Report of the Hanford Site/Central Characterization Project (Hanford/CCP) Audit Number A-13-15 (Audit Report), from the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO). CBFO and Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC (the Permittees) were required to submit this Audit Report under the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Hazardous Waste Facility Permit as specified in Permit Section 2.3.2.3. The intended scope of this final audit was to ensure the adequacy, implementation, and effectiveness of the Hanford/CCP waste characterization processes for contact-handled (CH) Summary Category Groups (SCGs) S3000 homogeneous solids and S5000 debris wastes, relative to the WIPP Permit.

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The Audit Report consisted of the following items:

- A narrative report
- Copies of relevant Permit Attachment C6 Checklists

No objective evidence was included as no waste characterization activities have been performed by Hanford/CCP since the last CBFO recertification audit (A-12-11).

NMED has examined the Audit Report for evidence of compliance with the requirements of Permit Sections 2.3.2 (Audit and Surveillance Program) and 2.3.1 (Waste Analysis Plan [WAP]). NMED notes the previous audit report, Audit A-12-11, explains that characterization activities at Hanford/CCP were suspended at the end of September 2011. This A-13-15 Hanford/CCP audit report further explains, "The results of this audit have confirmed that CCP operations at the Hanford Site continue to be in a state of suspension." and "Since Hanford/CCP suspended waste characterization activities, the audit team was unable to determine the adequacy of the program plans and procedures, the implementation of plans and procedures, and the effectiveness of characterization activities. Therefore, the adequacy, implementation, and effectiveness of all aspects of the Hanford/CCP waste characterization activities continue to be indeterminate."

As stated in the March 2, 2012 letter from John Kieling, then Acting Chief, NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau, to Jose Franco, Manager, Carlsbad Field Office, NMED clarified that DOE must continue to perform audits of generator sites' characterization activities.

NMED notes this audit report states that once waste characterization activities resume at the Hanford Site, CBFO will conduct a rectification audit as a basis for reinstating authority to perform waste characterization activities and continue shipments from Hanford.

NMED would also like to reiterate that according to audit report A-12-11, Hanford/CCP had identified 221 waste containers that have been characterized and entered into the Waste Data System and are all listed in attachment 3 of that report. They are considered ready for shipment, but remain at the Hanford Site.

Messrs. Franco and Sharif

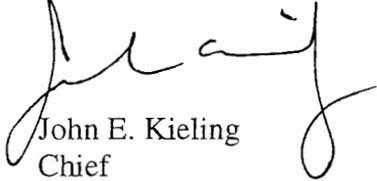
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This Audit Report review is of the broad programmatic implementation of waste characterization requirements at Hanford/CCP, and does not constitute approval of individual waste characterization procedures, nor condone inappropriate applications of those procedures. This review does not relieve the Permittees of their obligation to comply with the requirements of the permit or other applicable laws and regulations.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Trais Kliphuis at (505) 476-6051.

Sincerely,



John E. Kieling  
Chief

Hazardous Waste Bureau

cc: Tom Blaine, NMED EHD  
Trais Kliphuis, NMED HWB  
Steve Holmes, NMED HWB  
Ricardo Maestas, NMED HWB  
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