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RYAN FLYNN
Cabinet Secretary
BUTCH TONGATE
Deputy Secretary

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

March 05, 2015

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

Robert L. McQuinn, Project Manager
Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC
P.O. Box 2078
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221-2078

**RE: STATUS OF THE OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY/CENTRAL CHARACTERIZATION PROGRAM AUDIT A-14-29, ARGONNE NATIONAL LABORATORY/CENTRAL CHARACTERIZATION PROGRAM AUDIT A-14-20, SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORY/CENTRAL CHARACTERIZATION PROGRAM AUDIT A-14-26, ADVANCED MIXED WASTE TREATMENT PROGRAM AUDIT A-15-01, AND SAVANNAH RIVER SITE/CENTRAL CHARACTERIZATION PROGRAM AUDIT A-15-02.
EPA I.D. NUMBER NM4890139088**

Dear Messrs. Franco and McQuinn:

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) received the following Final Audit Reports from the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO):

- Oak Ridge National Laboratory Central Characterization Program (ORNL/CCP) Audit Report A-14-29, received August 28, 2014;
- Argonne National Laboratory/Central Characterization Program (ANL/CCP) Audit Report A-14-20, received November 6, 2014;
- Sandia National Laboratory/Central Characterization Program (SNL/CCP) Audit Report A-14-26, received November 20, 2014;

150304



Messrs. Franco and McQuinn

March 05, 2015

Page 2

- Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Facility (AMWTP) Audit Report A-15-01, received December 1, 2014; and
- Savannah River Site/ Central Characterization Program (SRS/CCP) Audit Report A-15-02, received March 4, 2015.

CBFO and Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC (the Permittees) were required to submit these Audit Reports under the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Hazardous Waste Facility Permit as specified in Permit Section 2.3.2.3.

On February 14, 2014, a waste container from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) was implicated in the release event at WIPP. Since then, the U.S. Department of Energy has and is currently investigating the causes which led to the release, including the breakdown in communication between the Permittees and LANL. On December 6, 2014, NMED issued to the Permittees Administrative Compliance Order HWB-14-21(ACO 14-21).

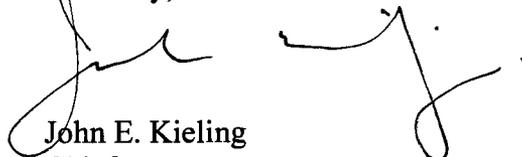
On December 16, 2014, NMED notified the Permittees of the suspension of the LANL/CCP Audit A-14-19 and the INL/CCP Audit A-14-18 audit reviews per ACO 14-21, Paragraphs 120 and 121. The decision has been made by NMED to suspend review and approval of all further final audit reports until such time that there is compliance with, or resolution of, ACO 14-21, and any Waste Analysis Plan (WAP)-related communication issues between the Permittees and generator sites that may have been discovered during formal and informal investigations have been resolved.

This letter hereby suspends final audit report reviews for the ORNL/CCP, ANL/CCP, SNL/CCP, AMWTP, and SRS/CCP audits that have been submitted to NMED. In addition, this letter memorializes that all future final audit report reviews will be suspended by NMED until such time that there is compliance with, or resolution of, ACO 14-21.

NMED may continue to observe future audits as scheduled by CBFO. The Permittees shall continue to meet the notification requirements as specified in Section 2.3.2.2 of the Permit.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Ricardo Maestas at (505) 476-6050 or myself at (505) 476-6035.

Sincerely,



John E. Kieling
Chief

Hazardous Waste Bureau

Messrs. Franco and McQuinn

March 05, 2015

Page 3

cc: B. Tongate, Deputy Secretary
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R. Maestas, NMED HWB
S. Holmes, NMED HWB
C. Smith, NMED HWB
S. Lucas-Kamat, NMED DOEOB
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